

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XX.

As between the man who achieves greatness and him who has greatness thrust upon him there lies a whole world of space, so is there an immense interval between one who is the object of his own delusions and him who forms the subject of delusion to others.

My reader may have already noticed that nothing was easier for me than to lend myself to the idle current of my fancy. Most men who build "castles in Spain," as the old adage calls them, do so purely to astonish their friends. I indulged in these architectural extravaganzas in a very different spirit. I built my castle to live in it; from foundation to roof-tree, I planned every detail of it to suit my own taste, and all my study was to make it as habitable and comfortable as I could. Ay, and what's more, live in it I did, though very often the tenure was a brief one; sometimes while breaking my egg at breakfast, sometimes as I drew on my gloves to walk out, and yet no terror of a short lease ever deterred me from finishing the edifice in the most expensive manner. I gilded my architraves and frescoed my ceilings as though all were to endure for centuries; and laid out the gardens and disposed the parterres as though I were to walk in them in my extreme old age. This faculty of lending myself to an illusion by no means adhered to me where the deception was supplied by another; from the moment I entered one of *their* castles, I felt myself in a strange house. I continually forgot where the stairs were, what this gallery opened on, where that corridor led to. No use was it to say, "You are at home here. You are at your own fireside." I knew and I felt that I was not.

By this declaration, I mean my reader to understand that, while ready for any exigency of a story devised by myself, I was perfectly miserable at playing a part written for me by a friend; nor was this feeling diminished by the thought that I really did not know the person I was believed to represent; nor had I the very vaguest clue to his antecedents or belongings.

As I set out in search of Miss Herbert, these were the reflections I revolved, occasionally asking myself, "Is the old lady at all touched in the upper story? Is there not something Private

Asylum-ish in these wanderings?" But still, apart from this special instance, she was a marvel of acuteness and good sense. I found Miss Herbert in a little arbour at her work; the newspaper on the bench beside her.

"So," said she, without looking up, "you have been making a long visit up-stairs. You found Mrs. Keats very agreeable, or you were so yourself."

"Is there anything wrong hereabouts?" said I, touching my forehead with my finger.

"Nothing whatever."

"No fancies, no delusions about certain people?"

"None whatever."

"None of the family suspected of anything odd, or eccentric?"

"Not that I have ever heard of. Why do you ask?"

"Well, it was a mere fancy, perhaps, on my part; but her manner to-day struck me as occasionally strange—almost flighty."

"And on what subject?"

"I am scarcely at liberty to say that; in fact, I am not at all free to divulge it," said I, mysteriously, and somewhat gratified to remark that I had excited a most intense curiosity on her part to learn the subject of our interview.

"Oh, pray do not make any imprudent revelations to me," said she, pettishly; "which, apart from the indiscretion, would have the singular demerit of affording me not the slightest pleasure. I am not afflicted with the malady of curiosity."

"What a blessing to you! Now, I am the most inquisitive of mankind. I feel that if I were a clerk in a bank, I'd spend the day prying into every one's account, and learning the exact state of his balance-sheet. If I were employed in the post-office, no terror of the law could restrain me from reading the letters. Tell me that any one has a secret in his heart, and I feel I could cut him open to get at it!"

"I don't think you are giving a flattering picture of yourself in all this," said she, peevishly.

"I am aware of that, Miss Herbert; but I am also one of those who do not trade upon qualities they have no pretension to."

She flushed a deep crimson at this, and after a moment said:

"Has it not occurred to you, sir, that people who seldom meet except to exchange ungracious

remarks, would show more judgment by avoiding each other's society?"

Oh, how my heart thrilled at this pettish speech! In Hans Grüter's Courtship, he says, "I knew she loved me, for we never met without a quarrel." "I have thought of that too, Miss Herbert," said I, "but there are outward observances to be kept up, conventionalities to be respected."

"None of which, however, require that you should come out and sit here while I am at my work," said she, with suppressed passion.

"I came out here to search for the newspaper," said I, taking it up, and stretching myself on the grassy sward to read at leisure.

She arose at once, and gathering all the articles of her work into a basket, walked away.

"Don't let me hunt you away, Miss Herbert," said I, indolently; "anywhere else will suit me just as well. Pray don't go." But without vouchsafing to utter a word, or even turn her head, she continued her way towards the house.

"The morning she slapped my face," says Hans, "filled the measure of my bliss, for I then saw she could not control her feelings for me." This passage recurred to me as I lay there, and I hugged myself in the thought that such a moment of delight might yet be mine. The profound German explains this sentiment well. "With women," says he, "love is like the idol worship of an Indian tribe; at the moment their hearts are bursting with devotion, they like to cut and wound and maltreat their god. With *them* this is the ecstasy of their passion."

I now saw that the girl was in love with me, and that she did not know it herself. I take it that the sensations of a man who suddenly discovers that the pretty girl he has been admiring is captivated by his attentions, are very like what a head clerk may feel at being sent for by the house and informed that he is now one of the firm! This may seem a commercial formula to employ, but it will serve to show my meaning, and as I lay there on that velvet turf, what a delicious vision spread itself around me. At one moment we were rich, travelling in splendour through Europe, amassing art-treasures wherever we went, and despoiling all the great galleries of their richest gems. I was the associate of all that was distinguished in literature and science, and my wife the chosen friend of queens and princesses. How unaffected we were, how unspoiled by fortune! Approachable by all, our graceful benevolence seemed to elevate its object and make of the recipient the benefactor. What a world of bliss this vile dress men call gold can scatter! "There—there, good people," said I, blandly, waving my hand, "no illuminations, no bonfires—your happy faces are the brightest of all welcomes." Then we were suddenly poor—out of caprice just to see how we should like it—and living in a little cottage under Snowdon, and I was writing, Heaven knows what, for the periodicals, and my wife rocking a little urchin in a cradle, whom we con-

stantly awoke by kissing, each pretending that it was all the other's fault, till we ratified a peace in the same fashion. Then I remembered the night, never to be forgotten, when I received my appointment as something in the antipodes, and we went up to town to thank the great man who bestowed it, and he asked us to dinner, and he was, I fancied, more than polite to my wife, and I sulked about it when we got home, and she petted and caressed me, and we were better friends than ever, and I swore I would not accept the minister's bounty, and we set off back again to our cottage in Wales, and there we were when I came to myself once more.

It is always pleasant—at least I have ever felt it so, on awaking from a dream, or a reverie—to know that one has borne himself well in some imaginary crisis of difficulty and peril. I like to think that I was in no hurry to get into the long-boat. I am glad I gave poor Dick that last fifty-pound note—my last in the world—and I rejoice to remember that I did not run away from that grizzly bear, but sent the four-pound ball right into the very middle of his forehead. You feel in all these that the metal of your nature has been tested, and come out pure gold: at all events, I did, and was very happy thereat. It was not till after some little time that I could get myself clear out of dream-land, and back to the actual world of small debts and difficulties, and then I bethought me of the newspaper which lay unread beside me.

I began it now, resolved to examine it from end to end, till I discovered the passage that alluded to me. It was so far pleasant reading, that it was novel and original. A very able leader set forth that nothing could equal the blessings of the Pope's rule at Rome—no people were so happy—so prosperous—or so contented—that all the granaries were full, and all the gaols empty, and the only persons of small incomes in the state were the cardinals, and that they were too heavenly-minded to care for it. After this there came some touching anecdotes of that good man the late King of Naples. And then there was a letter from Frohsdorf, with fifteen francs enclosed to the inhabitants of a village submerged by an inundation. There were pleasant little paragraphs, too, about England, and all the money she was spending to propagate infidelity and spread the slave-trade—the two great and especial objects of her policy—after which came insults to France and injustice to Ireland. The general tone of the print was war with every one but some twenty or thirty old ladies and gentlemen living in exile somewhere in Bohemia. Now none of these things touched *me*, and I was growing very weary of my search when I lighted upon the following:

"We are informed, on authority that we cannot question, that the young C. de P. is now making the tour of Germany alone and in disguise, his object being to ascertain for himself how the various relatives of his house, on the maternal side, would feel affected by any movement in France to renew his pretensions. Strange, undignified, and ill advised as such a

step must seem, there is nothing in it at all repulsive to the well-known traditions of the younger branch. Our informant himself met the P. at Mayence, and speedily recognised him from the marked resemblance he bears to the late duchess, his mother, he addressed him at once by his title, but was met by the cold assurance that he was mistaken, and that a casual similarity in features had already led others into the same error. The general—for our informant is an old and honoured soldier of France—confessed he was astounded at the ‘aplomb’ and self-possession displayed by so young a man; and although their conversation lasted for nearly an hour, and ranged over a wide field, the C. never for an instant exposed himself to a detection, nor offered the slightest clue to his real rank and station. Indeed, he affected to be English by birth, which his great facility in the language enabled him to do. When he quitted Mayence it was for central Germany.”

Here was the whole mystery revealed, and I was no less a person then a royal prince—very like my mother, but neither so tall nor robust as my distinguished father! “Oh, Potts! in all the wildest ravings of your most florid moments you never arrived at this!”

A very strange thrill went through me as I finished this paragraph. It came this wise. There is, in one of Hoffman’s tales, the story of a man who, in a compact with the Fiend, acquired the power of personating whomsoever he pleased, but who, sated at last with the enjoyment of this privilege, and eager for a new sensation, determined he would try whether the part of the Devil himself might not be amusing. Apparently Mephistopheles won’t stand joking, for he resented the liberty by depriving the transgressor of his identity for ever, and made him become each instant whatever character occurred to the mind of him he talked to.

Though the parallel scarcely applied, the very thought of it sent an aguish thrill through me—a terror so great and acute that it was very long before I could turn the medal round and read it on the reverse. There, indeed, was matter for vainglory! “It was but t’other day,” thought I, “and Lord Keldrum and his friends fancied I was their intimate acquaintance, Jack Burgoyne; and though they soon found out the mistake, the error led to an invitation to dinner, a delightful evening, and, alas! that I should own, a variety of consequences, some of which proved less delightful. Now, however, Fortune is in a more amiable mood: she will have it that I resemble a prince. It is a project which I neither aid nor abet; but I am not churlish enough to refuse the rôle any more than I should spoil the Christmas revelries of a country-house by declining a part in a tableau, or in private theatricals. I say, in the one case as in the other, ‘Here is Potts! make of him what you will. Never is he happier than by affording pleasure to his friends.’ To what end, I would ask, should I rob that old lady up-stairs at No. 12, evidently a widow, and with not too many enjoyments to solace her old age—why

should I rob her of what she has herself called the proudest episode in her life? Are not, as the moralists tell us, all our joys fleeting? Why, then, object to this one that it may only last for a few days? Let us suppose it only to endure throughout our journey, and the poor old soul will be so happy, never caring for the fatigues of the road, never fretting about the innkeepers’ charges, but delighted to know that his royal highness enjoys himself, and sits over his bottle of Chambertin every evening in the garden, apparently as devoid of care as though he were a bagman.”

I cannot say how it may be with others, but, for myself, I have always experienced an immense sense of relief, actual repose, whenever I personated somebody else; I felt as though I had left the man Potts at home to rest and refresh himself, and took an airing as another gentleman: just as I might have spared my own paletot by putting on a friend’s coat in a thunderstorm. Now I *did* wish for a little repose, I felt it would be good for me. As to the special part allotted me, I took it just as an obliging actor plays Hamlet or the Cock to convenience the manager. Mrs. Keats likes it, and, I repeat, I do not object to it.

It was evident that the old lady was not going to communicate her secret to her companion, and this was a great source of satisfaction to me. Whatever delusions I threw around Miss Herbert I intended should be lasting. The traits in which I would invest myself to *her* eyes, my personal prowess, coolness in danger, skill at all manly exercises, together with a large range of general gifts and acquirements, I meant to accompany me through all time, and I am a sufficient believer in magnetism to feel assured that by imposing upon *her* I should go no small part of the road to deceiving myself, and that the first step in any gift is to suppose you are eminently suited to it, is a well-known and readily acknowledged maxim. Women grow pretty from looking in the glass; why should not men grow brave from constantly contemplating their own courage?

“Yes, Potts, be a Prince, and see how it will agree with you!”

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. KEATS came down, and our dinner that day was somewhat formal. I don’t think any of us felt quite at ease, and, for my own part, it was a relief to me when the old lady asked my leave to retire after her coffee. “If you should feel lonely, sir, and if Miss Herbert’s company would prove agreeable—”

“Yes,” said I, languidly, “that young person will find me in the garden.” And therewith I gave my orders for a small table under a great weeping-ash, and the usual accompaniment of my after-dinner hours, a cool flask of Chambertin. I had time to drink more than two-thirds of my Burgundy before Miss Herbert appeared. It was not that the hour hung heavily on me, or that I was not in a mood of considerable enjoy-

ment, but, somehow, I was beginning to feel chafed and impatient at her long delay. Could she possibly have remonstrated against the impropriety of being left alone with a young man? Had she heard, by any mischance, that impertinent phrase by which I designated her? Had Mrs. Keats herself resented the cool style of my permission by a counter-order? "I wish I knew what detains her!" cried I to myself, just as I heard her step on the gravel, and then saw her coming, in very leisurely fashion, up the walk.

Determined to display an indifference the equal of her own, I waited till she was almost close; and then, rising languidly, I offered her a chair with a superb air of Brummelism, while I listlessly said, "Won't you take a seat?"

It was growing duskish, but I fancied I saw a smile on her lip as she sat down.

"May I offer you a glass of wine, or a cigar?" said I, carelessly.

"Neither, thank you," said she, with gravity.

"Almost all women of fashion smoke, now-a-days," I resumed. "The Empress of the French smokes this sort of thing here; and the Queen of Bavaria smokes and chews."

She seemed rebuked at this, and said nothing.

"As for myself," said I, "I am nothing without tobacco—positively nothing. I remember one night—it was the fourth sitting of the Congress at Paris—that Sardinian fellow, you know his name, came to me and said,

"There's that confounded question of the Danubian Provinces coming on to-morrow, and Gortschakoff is the only one who knows anything about it. Where are we to get at anything like information?"

"When do you want it, count?" said I.

"To-morrow, by eleven at latest. There must be at least a couple of hours to study it before the Congress meets."

"Tell them to bring in ten candles, fifty cigars, and two quires of foolscap," said I; "and let no one pass this door till I ring." At ten minutes to eleven next morning he had in his hands that memoir which Lord C. said embodied the prophetic wisdom of Edmund Burke with the practical statesmanship of the great Commoner. Perhaps you have read it?"

"No, sir."

"Your tastes do not probably incline to affairs of state. If so, only suggest what you'd like to talk on. I am indifferently skilled in most subjects. Are you for the poets? I am ready, from Dante to the Bigelow Papers. Shall it be arts? I know the whole thing from Memmling and his long-nosed saints, to Leech and the Punchists. Make it antiquities, agriculture, trade, dress, the drama, conchology, or cock-fighting—I'm your man; so go in, and don't be afraid that you'll disconcert me."

"I assure you, sir, that my fears would attach far more naturally to my own insufficiency."

"Well," said I, after a pause, "there's something in that. Macaulay used to be afraid of me. Whenever Mrs. Montagu Stanhope asked him to one of her Wednesday dinners, he always declined if I was to be there. You don't seem surprised at that?"

"No, sir," said she, in the same quiet, grave fashion.

"What's the reason, young lady," said I, somewhat sternly, "that you persist in saying 'sir' on every occasion that you address me? The ease of that intercourse that should subsist between us is marred by this Americanism. The pleasant interchange of thought loses the charming feature of equality. How is this?"

"I am not at liberty to say, sir."

"You are not at liberty to say, young lady?" said I, severely. "You tell me distinctly that your manner towards me is based upon a something which you must not reveal?"

"I am sure, sir, you have too much generosity to press me on a subject of which I cannot, or ought not, to speak."

That fatal Burgundy had got into my brains, while the princely delusion was uppermost; and if I had been submitted to the thumbscrew now, I would have died one of the Orleans family. "Mademoiselle," said I, grandly, "I have been fortunately, or unfortunately, brought up in a class that never tolerates contradiction. When we ask, we feel that we order."

"Oh, sir, if you but knew the difficulty I am in—"

"Take courage, my dear creature," said I, blending condescension with something warmer. "You will at least be reposing your confidence where it will be worthily bestowed."

"But I have promised, not exactly promised, but Mrs. Keats enjoined me imperatively not to betray what she revealed to me."

"Gracious Powers!" cried I, "she has not surely communicated my secret—she has not told you who I am?"

"No, sir, I assure you most solemnly, that she has not; but being annoyed by what she remarked as the freedom of my manner towards you at dinner, the readiness with which I replied to your remarks, and what she deemed the want of deference I displayed for them, she took me to task this evening, and without intending it, even before she knew, dropped certain expressions which showed me that you were one of the very highest in rank, though it was your pleasure to travel for the moment in this obscurity and disguise. She quickly perceived the indiscretion she had committed, and said, 'Now, Miss Herbert, that an accident has put you in possession of certain circumstances, which I had neither the will nor the right to reveal, will you do me the inestimable favour to employ this knowledge in such a way as may not compromise me.' I told her, of course, that I would; and having remarked how she occasionally—inadvertently, perhaps—used 'sir,' in addressing you, I deemed the imitation a safe one, while it as constantly acted as a sort of monitor

over myself to repress any relapse into familiarity."

"I am very sorry for all this," said I, taking her hand in mine, and employing my most insinuating of manners towards her. "As it is more than doubtful that I shall ever resume the station that once pertained to me; as, in fact, it may be my fortune to occupy for the rest of life an humble and lowly condition, my ambition would have been to draw towards me in that modest station such sympathies and affections as might attach to one so circumstanced. My plan was to assume an obscure name, seek out some unfrequented spot, and there, with the love of one—one only—solve the great problem, whether happiness is not as much the denizen of the thatched cottage as of the gilded palace. The first requirement of my scheme was that my secret should be in my own keeping. One can steel his own heart against vain regrets and longings; but one cannot secure himself against the influence of those sympathies which come from without, the unwise promptings of zealous followers, the hopes and wishes of those who read your submission as mere apathy."

I paused and sighed; she sighed too, and there was a silence between us.

"Must she not feel very happy and very proud," thought I, "to be sitting there on the same bench with a prince, her hand in his, and he pouring out all his confidence in her ear? I cannot fancy a situation more full of interest."

"After all, sir," said she, calmly, "remember that Mrs. Keats alone knows your secret. I have not the vaguest suspicion of it."

"And yet," said I, tenderly, "it is to *you* I would confide it; it is in *your* keeping I would wish to leave it; it is from *you* I would ask counsel as to my future."

"Surely, sir, it is not to such inexperience as mine you would address yourself in a difficulty?"

"The plan I would carry out demands none of that crafty argument called 'knowing the world.' All that acquaintance with the by-play of life, its conventionalities and exactions, would be sadly out of place in an Alpine village, or a Tyrolese Dorf, where I mean to pitch my tent. Do you not think that your interest might be persuaded to track me so far?"

"Oh, sir, I shall never cease to follow your steps with the deepest anxiety."

"Would it not be possible for me to secure a lease of that sympathy?"

"Can you tell me what o'clock it is, sir?" said she, very gravely.

"Yes," said I, rather put out by so sudden a diversion; "it is a few minutes after nine."

"Pray excuse my leaving you, sir, but Mrs. Keats takes her tea at nine, and will expect me." And, with a very respectful curtsy, she withdrew, before I could recover from my astonishment at this abrupt departure.

"I trust that my royal highness said nothing

indiscreet," muttered I to myself; "though, upon my life, this hasty exit would seem to imply it."

STONE FOR BUILDING.

BUILDING-STONES are obtained more or less from every geological formation known. Granite was used by the Egyptian, alabaster by the Assyrian, marble by the Greek, and sandstones and limestones by the Romans and mediæval and modern nations. Each nation has been more or less dependent on the native rock of the district for building-stone, and with material so ponderable this must ever remain one of the conditions of using stone largely for building purposes. Where granite is found, and has been used, or is used largely, the buildings will have a rude and massive grandeur; where marble abounds, we may have elegance and refined beauty, as in Greece; where the more common sandstones and limestones form the superficial crust of a country, buildings should be modified in form and detail to suit such materials. The great cost of working granite into the most simple forms, will ever prevent its use on a large scale by any nation, for domestic, as also even for municipal or even for national masonry. The exquisite marbles of Greece could only be used on Greek soil for temples and public buildings in general, and the variegated marbles of Italy for the beautiful mediæval and renaissance churches, campaniles, palaces, and towers.

It has been said that the stone produced in any district, harmonises best with such district; buildings erected of native stone are more in keeping with the surrounding landscape. The architect, as artist, has better arranged his palette.

Every building-stone is composed of grains and crystals, cemented and bound together by a natural process of chemistry. The hardest and most enduring rocks are compounds, which nature has formed, and which nature's elements can disintegrate again to mouldering waste. The question of destruction is one of time. But time may be lengthened or may be shortened by many causes.

When rocks are exposed to the actions of sunlight, wet, frost, and wind, the disintegrating process sets in with greater or less rapidity, according to the mechanical force, and the chemical character of the ingredients acting and acted upon. Some rocks, apparently sound when newly quarried, soon decay; or portions of the beds moulder and scale off, leaving the more enduring portions comparatively unchanged. In olden times, stones, when quarried, may have lain longer exposed to the action of the weather, before use; and it must have taken time to remove such stone long distances to build our early Norman castles, churches, &c.; as, also, our mediæval churches, cathedrals, abbeys, and country mansions. In this time, most of the soft or defective beds of stone would have given indications of decay, and the builders would reject them. Can our

more rapid means of transport have anything to do with the more rapid decay of modern buildings erected from stone obtained out of the same quarries which produced stone three and even more centuries ago, so little affected by weather, that the chisel marks, mouldings, and arrises, are as fresh now as they were the first day of erection? Men and machinery, more powerful than any known in mediæval times, get stone quicker in the quarry; canals and railways remove it more quickly to the site of the building; improved scaffolding, staging, and machinery, set it more quickly in the building; and then the weather, which ought to have been allowed to find out all the soft and defective stones in the quarry before the masons worked them, now finds them cut and carved into rich tracery, and set in the building ready to be crumbled rapidly to premature ruin.

Stones, like timber, to be used in building, should be well seasoned by exposure to weather. But in these modern railroad times, building goes on too quickly for endurance and security; hence, prematurely rotten ships on the water, and mouldering buildings on the land.

Great Britain is at present in tribulation because of the rapid decay of stone used at the new palace at Westminster. Poor old John Bull has been bothered by Commissioners' "Reports, with Reference to the Selection of Stone for Building the new Houses of Parliament," having first been wheedled by architects into selecting a plan and estimate, the one modest in appearance, the other moderate in amount. The modest elevation has now been developed into most profuse elaboration of carvings in thousands of repetitions, and the moderate estimate of some seven hundred thousands of pounds has been swelled into the vast sum of two millions two hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling. The results are a vast pile of carved stones, ranks of pinnacles, hundreds of weather-cocks (vanes), gilded towers. But all prematurely crumbling rapidly, to decay. In the midst of this costly disappointment, quack after quack rushes to the rescue; one, to improve the sewers; another, to amend the acoustics; a third, to take charge of the ventilation; and now there is a grand struggle of doctors with patented specifics to stop the cause of decay.

All the business connected with the new palace at Westminster appears to have been commenced in error. The site is below extreme high-water level of the adjoining river. The sewers and drains are therefore blocked, for a considerable period of each tide. The style of architecture, or the mode of carrying out such style, is a mistake. The stone, chosen with so much apparent forethought, searching experiment, and care, proves to be among the worst ever used in the metropolis.

In discussing the merits of stone for building purposes, architectural style is necessarily involved. Florid architecture has upon it, and about it, conditions facilitating rapid decay. Such as projecting plinths and buttresses, strings and label mouldings, cornices, mullions,

transoms and tracery, canopies, pinnacles, with flying buttresses and groined stone ceilings, all offering vast surfaces to the action of weather. Wind, sunshine, rain, fog, and frost, have full play; soil and soot settle in sinkings, and on ledges; sparrows, pigeons, and jackdaws, and sticks and dung to retain wet in all openings and recesses, and so help the work of destruction.

In scientific evidence on the properties and qualities of building-stones, the question of style in architecture does not seem to have received the attention it most undoubtedly deserves. A full catalogue of the abbeys, cathedrals, churches, and other buildings, at home and abroad, erected in the florid style of Gothic architecture, with the names of the stones used, the dates of erection, the amount of enrichment, the dates of decay and numbers of reparings, might have called attention to the bad consequences of repeating works on a large scale, liable to such contingencies.

The Commissioners who reported in 1839, have enumerated the names of some few buildings in England, and have stated dates and conditions as to endurance and decay. They actually say in one paragraph: "Buildings which are highly decorated afford a more severe test of the durability of any given stone, all other circumstances being equal, than the more simple and less decorated buildings, inasmuch as the material employed in the former class of buildings is worked into more disadvantageous forms than in the latter, as regards exposure to the effects of the weather." If this most important element in the inquiry obtained thus much notice from the Commissioners, it evidently never had any weight nor consideration with the architect, as enrichment upon enrichment was added, without, it has been said, either the knowledge or the sanction of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Works and Buildings, or of the committee of the Commons; the money voted, from time to time, having been expended in elaborate carvings, which have swelled the cost of the building to an enormous amount, and brought the reputation of the architect to grief.

The report of 1839 comprises a mass of information which will remain a text-book on this subject. The information is most useful, but its full value can only be brought out by a proper application of this knowledge in practice. The report states that stones most generally used for building purposes, are sandstones or limestones. Sandstones are generally composed of quartz or siliceous grains cemented by siliceous, argillaceous, calcareous, or other matter. Limestones are composed of carbonate of lime and carbonates of lime and magnesia, either nearly pure or mixed with variable proportions of foreign matter. Varieties of limestones termed oolites, are composed of oviform bodies cemented by calcareous matter of varied character. There are limestones termed "shelly," from being chiefly formed of shells, broken or entire, cemented by calcareous matter. Micaceous sandstones are very frequently laminated; that

is, built up of thin beds, like leaves in a book, having fragments of mica in planes parallel to such beds. Some limestones, such as the shelly, are also more or less laminated. There are flags, slates, and slaty rocks, also used as building-stones.

Modern architects have committed many errors in the use of building-stones by idly or blindly following precedent in general design and detail. The beautiful temples of Greece were carved out of the finest material for such a purpose—Parian marble—that the world can produce; the fine grain and uniform texture allowing the embodiment of exquisite mouldings. We moderns also admire the semi-transparent substance and brilliant colour, though some of the German architects declare that the Greeks only used marble because it readily took paint and colour. This may or may not be so. A Greek temple in its entire state was as perfect a building as ever came from the brain and hands of man. Since Stuart's and Revit's time, architects have blundered on, vainly trying with coarse-grained sandstones to imitate the forms and details executed in the fine-grained marble of Greece. Greek architecture, or rather the proportions of Greek architecture, as embodied in sandstone and stucco in Scotland and in England, is a hideous mistake; it is vulgar, staring, out of place, out of proportion, and out of keeping.

Renaissance architecture is better fitted to be executed in sandstones and limestones than the more subtle and refined Greek forms and details. But this is a style full of absurdities. Stones are rusticked, distorted, cut, carved, and set in every form and way in which stone ought not to be used. A rustic does not necessarily give strength, but frequently weakens the stone by the amount of chamfer, or sinking, removed. Look at Whitehall Chapel, at St. Paul's, at the War Office and Admiralty, or at any similar structure—Somerset House, for instance—and the stones will be found split and spalched, on bed, face, and joint. There are columns with nothing to carry, drip mouldings and pediments beneath porticoes and even within, sham porticoes, and sham jointing.

Norman architecture, in its simplicity and massiveness, is well suited to be executed in our sandstones and limestones; and so-called Gothic architecture, in its plain and simple garb, harmonises perfectly with our climate, our habits, and our building-stone. Let our architects work in the honest and homely style of the best early Gothic architects, and we may have a national style of architecture suited to the building-stones of the country and to the climate. We must remember that our forefathers had neither the facilities to obtain the best material nor the wealth to pay for working it; so that we ought not to take some type of buildings, beautiful in plan and outline, but rude in material and workmanship, and then, with better material and means to procure better workmanship, imitate these defects. This is only aping the blunder of the Chinese tailor,

who, when he made a new coat from an old pattern, took care to reproduce the holes, frays, and patches, so that the bewildered owner could not distinguish the old from new garment. In many of our modern churches, we have exactly this type of architecture. Have modern architects no brains? or, possessing brains, do they never use them in their profession? The first and last requisite for an architect is thought. The men who designed and built our cathedrals and abbeys were among the best masons who ever lived in any country or in any age; but there is bad masonry in the best of these buildings. The bedding and the jointing are absolute perfection; but the filling in of the walls, the combination of ashlar and of rubble, has been a cause of weakness. Stones have also been moulded, cut, carved, and exposed to weights and to weather which no stone of the kind could carry or withstand.

That which is wrong in principle never can be corrected in detail. The Commons' House of England have got for the nation's money a splendid blunder, a gorgeous gimcrack, which must, at no distant date, be a picturesque ruin. Surface painting and patented dressings of the surface may retard for a time, but cannot remove the inherent causes of rapid and inevitable ruin.

The Commissioners of 1839, in their report, state that "buildings in this climate are generally found to suffer the greatest amount of decomposition on their southern, south-western, and western fronts, arising, doubtless, from a prevalence of winds and driving rains from these quarters; hence it is desirable that stones of greater durability should at least be employed in fronts with such aspects." This recommendation of the Commissioners might also just as well have included a warning as to the amount of tracery and enrichments to be used "in fronts with such aspects." The Commissioners further remark: "Buildings situated in the country appear to possess a great advantage over those in populous and smoky towns, owing to lichens, with which they almost invariably become covered in such situations, and which, when firmly established over their entire surface, seem to exercise a protective influence against the ordinary causes of the decomposition of the stones upon which they grow."

These are curious remarks for eminent scientific commissioners to make; they savour more of artistic feeling, of an eye for colour, than of sound, rigid, scientific induction. The growth of lichens destroys stone, but does not in any way protect it. Lichen-covered stones would endure longer, without such vegetable growth, than with it. Some remarks are made as to the appearance of several frusta of columns and other blocks of stone quarried in the island of Portland at the time of the erection of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and now covered by a growth of lichens, beneath which can be seen even the marks of the chisel employed upon them more than a hundred and fifty years ago. These frusta and blocks are only the Old Parrs of their day. We ought to

know how many frusta and blocks quarried at the same time were rejected, left behind, and have long since mouldered. We see the decayed and the decaying blocks set in the walls of St. Paul's, as also those blocks which remain sound; but in the quarry, the Commissioners found only those which had endured. It is the same class of evidence as that given by anti-sanitarians, when they find a few aged people in an unhealthy district; but the sanitarian will persist in taking infantile mortality as the best test of the unwholesomeness or healthiness of any district; and our architect will do wisely if he take a parallel test as to the life of a stone when quarried. That quarry which produces the most satisfactory test of endurance, or life, in stones, after a five years' exposure to the elements, will yield the best stones for building purposes.

The Commissioners also say: "Colour is of more importance in the selection of a stone for a building to be situated in a populous and smoky town than for one to be placed in an open country, where all edifices usually become covered, as above stated, with lichens; for, although in such towns those fronts which are not exposed to the prevailing winds and rains will soon become blackened, the remainder of the building will constantly exhibit a tint depending upon the natural colour of the material employed." The artist feeling, and not the scientific knowledge of the Commissioners, has again had full play and expression. One would think that an architect about to erect any building liable to have, at least, two of its fronts blackened and disfigured by smoke, dust, and soot, need not be so very particular as to the uniform colour of the other fronts.

The Commissioners, as previously mentioned, state that they found the stones in highly-decorated architecture, as a rule, more decayed, because the grain of the stone is more exposed than in buildings of plainer design. By the published evidence it appears, however, that sandstones and limestones are found equally perfect in buildings of Norman and subsequent dates, as also that both sandstones and limestones have alike mouldered. Examples of magnesian limestone, or dolomite in buildings, in an advanced state of decay, are given; as "The churches of York and a large portion of the Minster, Howden Church, Doncaster Old Church, and others in that part of the country, many of which are so much decomposed that the mouldings, carvings, and other architectural decorations are often entirely effaced." And yet the Commissioners recommend "the magnesian limestone, or dolomite, of Bolsover Moor and its neighbourhood, as the most fit and proper material to be employed in the proposed new Houses of Parliament."

There are, it is true, evidence, in certain buildings named, of the endurance of magnesian limestone, but there is evidence equally strong as to the endurance of sandstone; and there are certain remarks stating that "the nearer the magnesian limestone approaches to equivalent proportions of carbonate of lime and

carbonate of magnesia, the more crystalline and better they are in every respect." But results show that the stone brought to the new Houses of Parliament and there used, cannot be crystalline because it is not enduring. The recommendation of the Commissioners, and the results, are not unlike Mr. BUCKSTONE's non sequitur in the farce: "Have you the mark of a strawberry on your left arm?" "No." "Then you are my long lost brother." Is the stone from the quarries of Bolsover crystalline and durable? No. Then it is the best stone with which to build the new Houses of Parliament.

OUR ROMAN DAY.

STRICTLY speaking, we start as it were from The Post; and though this phrase may have a certain offensive familiarity and racing flavour, obtaining principally among sporting gentlemen, I can only repeat advisedly that we start from The Post. Literally, and without quip or evasion, we do start from The Post. It is *the* expedition of the day. I do not envy the man who, with a tame sneaking regularity, would have his letters brought to him at his hotel by the accredited functionary. There is a dull sleepy uniformity in that old world process. More wholesome far is that early plunge into the bath of Roman morning air; that brisk going forth with lightest heart into this strange atmosphere, which braces, and makes the nerves and fibres tingle, and fills with the hope and passion of a day newly begun. We bound along a street, singing—making for the Post Pontifical. Cheerful, then, the shop windows opening their shutter-eyes; cheerful the gay French galliards, all trim and bright, stepping out lightly to relieve the guard; cheerful the veiled ladies, missal in hand, tripping in at church doors for morning mass. There is no such elastic medium in the world as a douche of Roman morning air.

The great square court of the huge palace, labelled in golden letters "POSTA PONTIFICIA," is more like an Exchange. The men who crowd together there, and come and go and pass and repass, seem on 'Change. The poor baited souls at the pigeon-holes, who shuffle letters like cards, and shuffle the same pack ten thousand times in the day, must have a weary time of it. What a fine sense of hearing they ought to have! All nations crowding desperately at the pigeon-holes, and frantically calling their own name. Polyglot din of "Tagenblitz!" "Greiner!" "Chopolski!" "Kissenlieff!" "Murphy!" I say! Murphy?" "De Brimont, monsieur!" and from afar off, from the very outskirts, in rich stentorian bass, "Smith—Smith, please!—anything for Smith?"

I say again, in an Eternal City I would not have my letters tendered to me in the regular way, for any consideration. I call this, pleasantly, the Morning Postal Surprise. It has all the excitement of drawing in the lottery, and none of the expense. There is all the gentle titillation of a protracted suspense: the struggle for the window—the hoarse denunciation of self—plain-

tive repetition of the barbaric syllables by mild official, and reproduction in a totally different shape—the horrid agitation as he shuffles his pack of cards—his doubts—his artful pauses, his hesitation over this name, which reads faintly like the barbaric syllables—his final disastrous shake of his head which tells that all is over,—all these make up a most pleasing entertainment. It has the zest of unflagging novelty, and an Eternal flavour. There is no reasonable ground why I should look for despatches as every morning comes round, or that the established course of mails should be done violence to; but still every succeeding morning finds me at the pigeon-hole, watching the drawing in the letter lottery. Here, too, through another pigeon-hole, does a gentleman hand me out those little airy stamps labelled “Franco Bollo Postale!” which flourish the tiara and cross keys so magnificently. The postage to England being exactly twenty-two halfpennies, it becomes a matter of much nicety to find accommodation (without prejudice to the direction) for all the parti-coloured insignia which are presented to me; and having found sittings for two yellow emblems, at three halfpennies each, in the centre under the direction, and for two pink at five halfpennies each, in the extreme right-hand corner, and for two green at one halfpenny each in left central corner, I am seriously put to it, for accommodation for two more halfpennies as yet undisposed of. They come in, however, at a vacant corner; and the effect of the whole, taken as a specimen of amateur bill-sticking, is decidedly pleasing. I gather, too, little traits of national manners highly instructive. One wet morning, when the rain is pattering down, a vehicle drives up, and an excited English gentleman, springing from it hastily, misses his footing on the slippery pavement and recovers himself with difficulty. Unconsciously he has jostled two Romans, and the shock has hurled one with violence to the earth; he falls prone, and bites—not the dust, but mud and liquid puddle. The Roman rises, fearfully bemuddled, but seems cowed and scared; and takes this scurvy treatment, unatoned for by regret or apology, with no other protest than a scowl.

Breakfast? Ah, surely! and the strain of business being now off the mind, it may reasonably relax. In this matter we are pure gipsies, highly irregular, and vagabondise disreputably from caffè to caffè. To-day I enter the Caffè Nuovo, or New Coffee House: so called from its being the oldest, dingiest, and saddest tabernacle in the city. It is a Corso palace, of forty long windows, retired from business, broken down utterly, and forced by hard times to turn itself to these baser uses. It is positively gaol-like with its black front and cell windows; and as I sit in its long chilly hall, with the dull frescoes overhead faded out of all shape and colour, and the cracked marble pavement under the feet; and as I note the dust and cobwebs, and the dirt an inch thick, and the general vault-like flavour of the place, I feel myself growing damp and mouldy too. When I deem myself

too cheerful, perhaps verging on the boisterous, I enter the Caffè Newgate, sit awhile thoughtfully, and issue forth again, correctly toned down to a happy cheerlessness. I am grateful that there is such an establishment in the city.

For a house in brilliant Spanish Place, I have a warm sympathy, reaching almost to affection, on the score of a chocolate of such rich consistence that I distinctly recal my apostle's spoon standing up in it stiff and straight. But I must confess it is the Greek coffee-house that I principally affect, chiefly on account of the delightful eccentricity of manners which there prevails. All the bearded pards of an Eternal City flock hither. There, though room is scant and fittings are barren, I see every Eternal artist—sculptor, painter, actor, and singer—German, French, and English—crowd in for his first meal. The study of this odd company, their ways, their dress, their gutturals, and general queerinesses, are worth a “wilderness of monkeys.” The aboriginal primitiveness of the place is comforting; and I love to see the Greek proprietor at his counter and furnaces, compounding the drinks. The orders are sung aloud in plain chant. As I enter, the waiter heralds my coming from afar off, intoning loudly, “Caffè latte! caffè latte!” for my features, and the beverage I habitually infuse, are grown familiar to him. Thereupon the Greek at counter begins compounding, with a deftness and mystery I am never weary of admiring. He takes a tumbler, and with one motion half fills it with sugar, and with another fits into it a broad funnel. A kind of devil comes rushing in from the furnace—all hot and fiery—with milk and coffee—all hot and fiery also—and those two elements are poured in, bubbling, through the funnel. Ready now, waiter, with that tiny tray, which you shall crowd artfully with the components of the banquet: steaming tumbler in corner; two little twisted rolls, one of sour, one of sweet bread, to suit the palate; a pat of rich butter from the Borghese farms; three pasticcie, or chocolate cakes, very toothsome as a finish; a miniature napkin, spotless as, and no bigger than an infant's bib,—for all these dainties is accommodation found on the miniature tray. When reckoning comes, the attendant spirit begins plain chant again, singing aloud, arithmetically, and checking off on his fingers, “Caffè latte!” (first finger), “colla pane!” (second), “e burra!” (third), “e tre pasticcie!” (fourth). Some spendthrifts of the place occasionally add a farthing for “service,” but such liberality is considered, on the whole, in bad taste. I, who magnificently lay down the humble remuneration of two baiocchi, am plainly considered to be demoralising the attendance, and introducing ruinous tastes.

After this meal, the world is all before us. The old rusted lions that have been roaring in their own soft touching fashion for centuries back; the churches, temples, pillars, statues, pictures of the great art menagerie, are wooing irresistibly. Privy council is convoked in the scarlet chamber, claims are submitted, urged, re-

jected, division is called for—and noisily carried. Round the corner comes clattering the ready barouche—the sun shines out brightly—close the door and steps with the crack of a rifle—and away! But whitherward? The fashionable poet of this Eternal City sings of his pet days, which he would note with a white mark. But how distinguish where all are white? Shall I take that fair sunshiny morning—when the newness was on all things, and everything was a surprise—when we rolled away through the fresh and balmy Roman air and the sunlight, making for the famous church of Santa Maria Maggiore? What a quaint odd effect, as we coast by those low-lying grounds, hedged in with every-day houses, where are the rusty arches and trios of pillars strewn up and down in a lonely fashion, to have pointed out to you carelessly with the driver's whip three or four stories of copper-coloured arcades so familiar as the Coliseum. Stop, coachman! the famous building to be dismissed thus lightly, where the martyrs—But it is a good mile away out of the road, signor, and, besides, is mapped out for another day. It seems to me a fairy church, and I look at it with a delight almost childish. We have to do with the wildernesses of pillars, and the flat roof laid on them all a sheet of dull Eastern gold, and the quaint crusted mosaics like a crystallised rockery, and the cooling breezes that blow acceptably among the marble trees.

Or it may be that we are standing in that mall of the Capitol—where is the most mournful statue in the world, the Dying Gladiator. The Eternal City has many caskets, and many precious things in every casket, and yet I know not if this poor drooping figure, all browned and discoloured, and wrung with an unutterable suffering, be not the most unique and touching of all its treasures. I know not how much of this sad effect must be placed to the account of the tawny colouring, and to the absence of the smug spotlessness and dainty cleanliness of newer marble. That strange tone lends a sort of warmth, suggests life and flesh and blood, and pleads powerfully for Mr. Gibson's colour creed.

Or else, we skim down the long Vatican galleries, where there is crowded a whole population of men, and women, and animals—in stone. I should not like to be alone with such company towards the small hours. I stand in especial awe of those grim philosophers in the marble togas. What wicked-looking fellows to meet trooping it along, like Don Giovanni Commendatori! But, oh, for Socrates, wisest of men, to have been this snub-nosed, negro-lipped, degraded-looking thing! very swinish, precisely the face that would rob a church—rather a temple—of his time. The Greeks must surely have been tired, not of hearing him called Just, but of those revolting lineaments which, besides, suggest to me strongly the cheeks of Edmund Gibbon, author of the *Decline and Fall* of this very city. The emperors are delightful. We look for a row of heads on the old hackneyed classical lines—the frown, the

straight nose, the regular mouth, and the laurel wreath so irritating to the tender skin. Instead, a row of most comically modern visages, of ordinary unclassical street faces, such as, if we passed to the irreverence of decorating with hats and collars Byronic, we would encounter at a hundred crossings betwixt Oxford-street and Temple-bar. Trajan has positively the roguish leer of a French old gentleman sitting in the Palais Royal garden, and looking after the passing Bonnes. Some, traditionally regarded as The Monsters, turn out surprisingly gentlemanlike and of refined manners, whom you would be rather pleased to see taking your wife down to dinner.

Or shall we present ourselves at that daily levee which the famous Apollo, the “far-darting,” holds in his little temple all to himself? Is it heresy to hint that he is a little too dandified, too much of the fashionable exquisite—a statue of the Beau Monde? I can fancy him the Duca di Belvedere, with a soft lisp, and giving you that disengaged finger; as compared with the poor brown statue crushed down and just giving up the ghost, it is as Saint James to Saint Giles. I can forgive that profane party of three, bursting with irreverent laughter in the sacred presence; and I can have indulgence for the black-haired sparkling English lady who is declaiming (mock heroically) out of her scarlet manual the appropriate versicles selected there. There is an Eternal Murray as well as an Eternal City. In another little temple of his own, Laocoon struggles ineffectually with his snakes, and the marble boxers of Canova square at each other fiercely, for a stone champion's belt.

A dip again into the balmy Roman air, and we are in the brighter streets. As the black ball ascends slowly from the high cerie where the famous Jesuit Secchi sits and hunts down planets, the boom of the French cannon is borne to us, and lets the city know it is noon. And that token of dipping brings to my mind that, at the last corner, I have been rubbing my eyes and putting it to myself seriously, was I in a dream? For I have seen, actually seen and felt, a familiar sponge bath, the Englishman's sponge bath, set out for sale! I have heard of an English gentleman taking one of these engines with him over the whole country. By some, it was taken for a musical instrument of the gong order: by others, to be an enlarged tea-tray!

Into bright Conduit-street again, or “Veer Kondotty,” which reads like Dutch, but is no more than the broad British ring for “Via de Condotti.” The witching hour of lunch draws on, and it is full time to pass reverently into the tabernacle of the “traitor” Spillman—“traiteur” he chooses to call himself. Unapproachable artist, and immortal chef! It is held currently, I believe, that he is to the full as much one of the glories of an Eternal City as the Forum, Baths of Titus, Saint Peter's, or other monument. The “traitor” affects the solid, the substantial, and goes straight home to British hearts. It is rumoured that the traitor's balance (pecuniary, not physical) is something to make

you gasp; and yet his sire made entry into the Eternal City in the rumble of a chaise. He was a simple courier, and begat the traitor. Very seducing are his counters, strewn with all shapes of Italian confectionary, confounding by their variety. Fatal those sweets to the enjoyment of the greater banquet now not very remote: and yet how seducing!

Hark to the music swelling down old Veer Condotty, drawing yet near and nearer! Running to the door, pâté in hand, we look out at the bright red-limbed little Frenchmen tripping by in the march they so love. How very clean they are, and how their arms glitter, and their cheerful colouring radiates! The fringe of ragamuffin, or St. Giles's element, which by the law of bands, unfailing in every clime and capital, hangs on the flanks of these musical warriors, is here present in full flavour and abundance.

Now we go round curiosity shops, and hunt out curious pictures, and amber-coloured goblets of Venetian glass, and quaint cinque cento cabinets, and gold inlaid knives with which noble families made their pens three centuries ago, and coins and medals and gems and carvings, and have a chatter, besides, with the old curiosity man himself, who is learned in his craft, and not too greedy for pelf. Or there is that lecture by the erudite English consul, the antiquarian Newton, who has been delving at Halicarnassus, and lighted on the Patagonian temple described by Herodotus, and has sent home treasures and marbles more exquisite in their delineation of the human figure than those called Elgin. He waits his company now, in the Barberini Palace, where an accomplished American gentleman has gathered all his friends, as it might be to a soirée. Or it may be that we are expected at the Collegio Romano, where a skilful Jesuit, the most able numismatist of his age, will take us over the famed Etruscan museum, and illustrate it with a running commentary; or will introduce us to the observatory of Padre Secchi; or where another skilful Jesuit is restoring a gigantic bit of Pompeian mosaic pavement with most marvellous cunning. Or it may be that we have to journey out far upon the Appian Way, and have to descend into tombs gloomier than those of all the Capulets; but attended by some pundit learned in the lore of catacombs, who has all the scenery and accessories at his fingers' ends.

But at times, when the flood-gates of Heaven are burst open, and the rains descend with a fierce shock unequalled in any other city, we are fast imprisoned in the scarlet chambers of our hostelry, from the windows of whose apartments we see the wretched wayfarers flying for their lives, and for shelter, to the generous Spillman's. And when it is past noon, and the deluge only increases, a rickety covered ark clatters to the door, sent for in desperation; and having looked out a profitable church in rubicund Murray, and a vein as yet unworked, we go forth into the storm. There are immortal imperishable frescoes in the unworked church, rubicund Mur-

ray tells us, painted by Domenichino, and another gentleman whose name I cannot recal, in a generous rivalry. Never to be forgotten are the waste of the Forum, the Arches of Constantine and company, as seen from the ark window, dripping and soaking under the universal shower-bath. Cheerless and dispiriting are the old church and convent where the painters painted "in a generous rivalry," and on whose steps the rain patters and patters again. Not to be forgotten are the cold yellow cloisters, and the lone open square where the rain came down drip, drip, as into a domestic pond, while the shivering sacristan was fetched out with his keys, to show the paintings, done "in a generous rivalry." Such poor washed-out things, faded, indistinct, colourless, as if the drip outside had got to them also, and had been washing them down for years! I cannot recal so dismal an exhibition of art.

TRANSPLANTED.

WHEN last I saw her, all cold and white,
On her maiden bed extended,
It seemed to me that with the light
Of her life my own was ended.

It seemed to me that I *could* not bear
The burden of life without her;
To see the sunshine, to feel the air
That could never more play about her—

Lovingly play round her lovely head,
Giving fond and playful kisses,
Making the rose on her cheek more red,
Stirring her sun-gilt tresses.

I felt as though I could never bear
The ceaseless pain and pressure
Of endless days, when she might not share
One sorrow of mine, or pleasure.

Stark and pallid and cold she lay,
Not *she*—the soul-warmed woman—
But the dreadful frigid image of clay
That with her had nothing in common.

Among the flowers about the bier
I noted a large-eyed blossom,
That looked at me through a dewy tear
As it lay on her lifeless bosom.

A large white daisy. I kissed its face,
In her cold dead hand I laid it,
And I bid it nevermore leave that place,
Though the breath of the grave should fade it.

I fancied that she would feel it there,
And that when she was in heaven,
She would send me a sign that the bond which here
So bound us should not be riven.

Perhaps a childish and wild belief;
But when in some hopeless sorrow
That rejects all thought of a common relief,
The heart is fain to borrow

From the realms of fancy some hope, some dream,
It may be some superstition,
That, however childish or wild, will seem
Like a real Heaven-sent vision.

And so with me. When the friendly night
O'er my sleepless pillow lingers,
Yon star, I think, is the daisy white
I placed in her lifeless fingers.

HAPPY AND UNHAPPY COUPLES.

MATRIMONY is either the most happy or the most wretched condition of human life. It is therefore not by any to be unadvisedly and lightly enterprised. But civilised nations are not quite agreed as to the degree of facility which ought to be permitted of marrying in haste and repenting at leisure; while some allow this most solemn engagement to be contracted with the utmost ease, others surround it with so many formalities and checks, that there are cases in which it is difficult to get married at all. The golden mean between these two extremes is most desirable for a people to arrive at, and is well worthy of all the attention that the philosopher and the legislator can bestow upon it. We therefore open with more than common interest a book by M. Auguste Carlier, in which he compares marriage in the United States with that which is lawful in England and in France.

The last of these three countries has adopted the plan of fencing in marriage with many impediments. France is as exclusive and protectionist in her matrimonial as in her commercial intercourse. In matters connubial, she yields not the slightest international reciprocity. Most countries allow a marriage contracted beyond their own limits, to be valid at home, provided all the legal forms of the country in which the marriage takes place have been complied with. If an Englishman marry a Russian lady, in Russia, and according to Russian law, that marriage is good in England; but if a Frenchman marry an English girl, in England, and according to English law, that union may be pronounced null and void in France, unless every requirement of French law has been obeyed.

Take a case, which is not imaginary in its leading points. The Smiths have made money and retired from business. They spend a winter in Paris, and give handsome entertainments to mixed assemblies of French and English. Mrs. Smith is an excellent person, with no doubt about her own talent for managing, and a great idea of what money will do. Miss Smith is charming and two-and-twenty; one of her charms is three hundred a year, left by a bachelor uncle, of which she is in full enjoyment. Her brother brings to the house, the only son of the Comte de Quelquechose, who is seriously smitten. The De Quelquechoses would be poor in England, but are rich in France. Instead of being in debt, they put by a trifle every year. Their tastes and manners are simple and unpretending; but they are noble, and believe themselves at heart formed of different material from plebeian folk. They have in Burgundy a dilapidated farm-house, which their neighbours call "the château," surrounded with vineyards; they have a dingy suite of apart-

ments in Paris. Madame de Quelquechose farms a portion of her own estate, transacts all business, and does and is everything. Her son talks to her about the Smiths; she consents to receive a visit from Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Smith calls too early, much too splendidly attired; and, catching Madame de Quelquechose in a charwoman's dress, doing housemaid's work, has the weakness to display patronising airs. Still, madame returns the call, is pleased with the daughter, and might have approved of her in the end, if she did not every day detest the mother more and more. She tells her son the alliance will not suit her, and dismisses the matter from her thoughts. Mrs. Smith, determined not to be beaten, allows the young man's intimacy with her daughter to increase. When madame hears of this, she quietly observes, that young men are naturally fond of amusement; she knows the game is in her own hands.

The courtship has arrived at the marrying point, but the lover is sure it is of no use to ask his parents' consent. He is four-and-twenty. Clever Mrs. Smith thinks there is wisdom in the scheme of their getting married in England, as they cannot get married in France. Miss Smith goes to stay a month with an aunt in London. Young Monsieur de Quelquechose follows, and resides in the same parish for the term prescribed by law. There is nothing clandestine in the business. When the time arrives, they are married, by banns, as a further precaution, lest a license should be cavilled at. The bride is given away by her brother. It is a quiet wedding, not a runaway match.

The bridegroom announces his marriage to his parents, in respectful terms, as an accomplished fact, in which he hopes they will acquiesce—though he does not exactly say so—now they cannot help it. He returns with his bride to France, and presents her to society, as Madame de Quelquechose. But his parents refuse to receive or acknowledge her. They do more; they institute law proceedings, on the ground that the marriage is invalid in the absence of their consent and the fulfilment of every detail of the French marriage law. They gain their cause. The court pronounces the English marriage certificate to be waste paper. Miss Smith is compelled to drop the name and title of De Quelquechose and to resume her own; henceforth she can live with monsieur as his mistress merely, and not as his wife; and children so born are illegitimate in France. Miss Smith has fallen into a most cruel position; she is neither bond nor free. In France, she is a single woman; in England, she is a lawful wife. She is the widow of a living husband. She is not married at all in France; and yet, were she to marry in England, she would commit bigamy. Such is the control which French parents are able to exercise over their children's marriages. Amongst the lower orders of society especially, the power of withholding consent is occasionally made the means of extorting conditions favourable to the parents' selfish inter-

rests. But let every English person about to marry a French person carefully study the Code Napoléon beforehand, under the tutorship of an intelligent avocat, and have the marriage ceremonies, if possible, performed within the limits of the French territory.

With the superior classes in France, paternal authority remains almost what it was in patriarchal and in feudal times. The mother scarcely allows the daughter out of her sight; the girl, consequently, is ignorant of worldly matters, and has formed no habit of judging for herself, which will serve to guide her after marriage. She sees with mamma's eyes, and hears with mamma's ears only, unless, indeed, mamma allows her to be guided also by a spiritual director. The mother feels the burden of this responsibility, and hastens to be rid of it by an early marriage, in which the child is expected simply to acquiesce in the parents' choice. We English, and also our American cousins, severely criticise the little free will allowed to French girls in a matter of such immense importance, holding that it affords but a slight prospect of future happiness.

The code requires that the bridegroom should be at least eighteen, and the bride fifteen years of age. It exacts the consent not only of the two parties most interested, but also of their fathers and mothers, and, failing them, of their grandfathers and grandmothers, and even of a family council, if no elder relations exist. In the case of any of the seniors refusing their sanction, in order to effect the celebration of the marriage, in the first place, the man must be twenty-five and the woman twenty-one years of age; secondly, the party to whom consent to marry is refused must institute respectful proceedings (*des actes respectueux*) addressed to the non-consenting father, mother, or senior relation; in short, the child must go to law with the parent to compel him or her to show cause why consent should not be given. But such "respectful proceedings" are undertaken most unwillingly, and we cannot help honouring the unwillingness. They are rarely thought of, and still more rarely carried into practice. They involve considerable delays, which give time either for the projected marriage to be relinquished, or for the parent to yield at the last moment, to avoid being actually compelled to consent. In the uncommon case where the parental signature is withheld until extorted by application of the pressure of law, the ill blood so generated is probably greater than that arising from the majority of our elopements. But, in the way in which the system generally and really works, the parent has as good as a complete veto on his children's marriages.

Consent being given, the marriage is preceded by the publication of banns at the mayoralties belonging to the residences of the contracting parties; it must be celebrated by the mayor of one of these residences, in the public mayoralty, in the presence of four witnesses. The marriage deed is signed by the parties, the witnesses, and

the mayor, and is kept in duplicate. This is the civil marriage, which is indispensable by law. The religious ceremonies—which may be dispensed with, if the parties think fit—are celebrated afterwards, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, according to the creed of the bride and bridegroom. A few couples are married civilly only; if the gentleman thinks lightly of the benediction of the Romish priest—his repugnance being further increased by the condition of his making auricular confession to the said priest before it is granted—the lady's friends will rarely allow the religious marriage (a sacrament) to be omitted. Of course the priesthood do all in their power to discourage unblest unions by throwing an indirect stigma on the offspring, such as by refusing to allow the church bell to ring at the baptism of children whose parents have not been married at church but at the mayoralty only.

In accordance with the doctrine of the state religion, the law of France declares marriage to be indissoluble. The only course open to married couples who find it impossible to live together, is separation, in cases laid down by law. The number of separations is a sort of touchstone of the wisdom of the choice which husbands and wives have made, and of the degree of harmony existing between them. It is to be regretted that, in France, separations are augmenting in a proportion which is far from following the slow increase of the population. Official statistics inform us that the number of demands for separation, which from 1851 to 1855 averaged from 1000 to 1100 annually, rose to 1727 in 1857, and to 1977 in 1858. Of these demands, 1777 were made by wives, and 200 only by husbands. It is not pretended that statistics will tell us all about unhappy marriages. In France, as in other countries, there are separations by mutual consent, which avoid the public scandal of law proceedings; and there are the still deeper sorrows which hide themselves from every eye, assuming the outward appearance of content, avoiding even a separation by mutual consent, for the interest and reputation of a rising family.

A married Frenchwoman is in every respect her husband's equal; he is not her lord and master, but her friend. "*Mon ami*," is the title by which she addresses him. The law may require her to love him, to honour him by virtuous conduct, but not to obey him. He has indeed a certain superiority in the management of their common interests, but her rights are not the more effaced for that; in certain cases her concurrence is indispensable, and she has a deliberative voice with an absolute veto. She remains the mistress of the whole of her fortune, by making a reservation respecting her personal property. The husband and wife are two partners who club their capital for mutual advantage, but who keep it distinct in their accounts, to facilitate any partial or complete dissolution. She can make her will, and leave her husband without a sou of hers; if she die intestate, her property, in some cases, slips completely through

his fingers. She must will it to him, for him to be safe and sure. The profits arising from the industry of the husband and the wife, and the savings they may be able to put by, form a common stock, to the half of which the wife is entitled. The law places such confidence in her, that, in the event of her widowhood, she, by right, is the guardian of her children. The whole situation is completely superior to that of woman in England, and even in America. Between brothers and sisters there exists a perfect equality as to their rights of inheritance from their father and mother. If the parents are inclined to disturb this equality, or to favour a third person to the prejudice of their children, the law fixes limits to the power of bequeathing. A Frenchman cannot cut off an offending son or daughter with a shilling, nor can he impoverish his neglected family by leaving large sums to charitable institutions.

But the prerogatives of the Frenchwoman are not confined to her family and social privileges; she may enter the same spheres of activity as her husband; the career of business and manufactures is open to her; and she has proved under every circumstance that she is equally capable with her male companion. Compare this condition with that of the women of ancient Rome, who were kept in a perpetual minority, on account of their levity of character. In England, and also in America, women are treated perhaps too much after the Roman fashion, so entirely are they kept in the background, as far as business is concerned.

In England, we have a foretaste of marriage as practised in the United States, in respect to the great liberty allowed to girls to select the object of their choice. Nevertheless, there are very marked differences; one of the first points which is striking in England, is the paternal authority which usually reigns predominant in family affairs. Still, the English girl is allowed to make her choice uncontrolled, although generally under the mother's eye, who does not interfere with her daughter's growing affection, unless grave objections present themselves. In a great commercial and manufacturing country, where a man by industry and intelligence may arrive at a certain position of fortune, the young lady's dowry is less an object than her personal qualities and the consideration enjoyed by her family; unlike France, where a great number of functionaries and military men, with fixed and scanty emoluments, are too often tempted by the exigencies of their position to yield to pecuniary considerations.

America is the land of liberty—for whites. American girls enjoy greater freedom than English; they are independence itself. But it is fair to allow that this liberty and independence are not exposed to the same inconveniences there as elsewhere; for, in America, woman is placed under the shield of public opinion. However young and inexperienced she may be, she can travel alone throughout the United States.

In the United States, according to the old

Common Law of England, the minimum of age for marriage is fourteen years for men, and twelve for women: after which, young people may dispense with the consent of father, mother, or guardian. Moreover, the Common Law enacts neither the publication of banns, nor witnesses, not even the signature of the parties, and the marriage may be celebrated by a justice of the peace or a minister of religion, no matter where resident, even beyond the circumspection of the residence of the bride and bridegroom, at any hour and place whatever.

In the United States, as in England, it suffices that cohabitation should have taken place to render judges very indulgent, and to validate an imperfect marriage. This probably was the reason which induced the Court of Queen's Bench, in 1855, to decide that a Protestant minister might himself celebrate his own marriage ceremony, asking himself the required questions, and then returning his own answers. The example has not found many imitators. Accomplished facts would have no influence whatever on the decision of a French judge respecting a doubtful marriage. Circumstances sometimes unite to give an extraordinary aspect to certain unions. Thus, it is related that, in the State of Maine, the driver of a railway train—too busy, no doubt, to be able to devote a whole day to his wedding—made his bride and a minister start in one of the carriages, and had the ceremony performed while the train was running.

A still more original occurrence is the marriage of a young Virginian couple, in 1855, who had to cross a river to reach the minister who was to unite them. But a flood had converted the river into a torrent; it was neither fordable nor ferryable; and they could not expect that, to crown their happiness, the minister would brave Leander's fate. They, therefore, shouted to the people on the opposite bank, explaining what they wanted. The pastor appeared: they folded the paper containing the necessary authorisation, tied it to a stone, and threw it to the minister, who, after reading it and exchanging the usual questions and answers, married the adventurous couple across the river according to the rites of the Church. These marriages, singular as they appear in form, are not the less in earnest for that, and are followed by every civil consequence required.

Other eccentric weddings, not in earnest, are a serious blow to the respect due to matrimony, and to the law which sanctions it. Among other follies, certain young Americans have amused themselves by contracting mock marriages, or rather by getting married in joke. If two persons, with no serious intention of marrying, nevertheless go through all the formalities thereof, by way of pastime, they are well and effectually married by a legal bond. A case of the kind occurred in Pennsylvania, in 1857. Miss J. met Mr. B. at a party; they exchanged pleasantries on the subject of marriage; Mr. B. asked Miss J.'s hand, which was given. To continue the joke, they went to the house of

a neighbouring minister, where the conjugal knot was tied. After the young lady had recovered her senses a little, she did not choose to carry the simulation of matrimony further. But the bridegroom took up the matter in a serious light. The girl was obliged to petition for a divorce, as the only means of escaping the legal consequences of her thoughtless engagement. Another similar fact is quoted; and in both cases the divorce was pronounced.

It is even extraordinary that like occurrences are not more frequent; for, according to the doctrine adopted by different courts of law, a matrimonial engagement may be inferred from circumstances only. "It is not necessary," said a judge of the State of New York to a jury, "that a promise of marriage should be made in express terms; frequent visits, conversation in whispers, expressions of attachment, presents offered, walks and drives taken together, are so many circumstances which may be insisted upon, in proof of the existence of an engagement to marry. And if these indications have sufficient probability to convince the judges, the law requires nothing further, to establish the bond."

So arbitrary a power of interpretation in so grave a matter has opened the door to the most shameful speculation. Marriageable girls and widows, casting off the reserve which is proper to their sex, hunt after rich men, especially men in the decline of life, and endeavour to attract them by all sorts of artifices, and to spread the report—in consequence of familiarities in which they take the first step—that a wedding is in preparation. When they think they have accumulated proofs enough to make out a strong presumptive case, they exact either marriage or heavy damages. Sometimes, to escape undeserved scandal, the gentleman yields to this Machiavellian pressure, and sacrifices to a quiet life, a sum which mostly runs up to a tolerably high figure. If he resist, he is dragged in no time into court.

In such questions, the jury is easily impressed by the voice and manner of the woman who presents herself in the guise of a victim; and verdicts have been given so monstrously exaggerated, that they seem rather the outbreaks of anger than judicial decisions. Recently, a case of this kind occurred in the State of Missouri; the jury, yielding to the excitement of the moment, condemned a wealthy man, against whom there was nothing but simply presumptive evidence, to pay 20,000*l.* damages to a woman who kept a boarding-house at St. Louis. The gentleman who had fallen into the snare did not submit to the verdict; he appealed; and the judges, in cooler blood and better edified respecting the lady's previous history, annulled the sentence, and discharged the defendant from all further pursuit. It was time to give a lesson to this kind of women; for actions for breach of promise of marriage had become common throughout the United States. Some half-dozen heavy condemnations appear to have excited a number of women to

bring their actions, right and left. It had become dangerous for wealthy men to behave politely to unmarried women. The result of the Missouri appeal allowed them to breathe a little more freely.

Certainly, American legislation is strange! If the smallest scrap of land has to be sold, there must be a deed signed and sealed in the presence of witnesses, and properly registered. In the case of a will, additional guarantees are required; but in the gravest act of human life, simple probabilities suffice to prove an engagement. As if marriage did not involve more important consequences to a man's welfare, than a sale of land or even a will!

One circumstance which gives a great impulse to hasty and impromptu marriages, is the rapid development of the new States of the Union, into which a great number of adventurers rush, with the certainty of obtaining opulence, or at least a very easy position. At first they are colonies of men only, whose increasing wealth enables them to indulge in the comforts of a family. To these matrimonial markets many girls of some education resort, urged by ambition and the love of adventure, to risk the chances of a western alliance. Articles appear in newspapers, begging young women to come, offering them the liberty of a choice of husbands, and promising them liberal and certain settlements. The scarcity of women is continually felt at intervals in the regions of the west. In May, 1857, the Iowa Reporter made an energetic appeal to the ladies, entreating women of all nations to travel in that direction. It stated that, according to the census of June, 1856, there were in Iowa 33,640 more men than women, and that, at the time of writing, they were short of 60,000 women to establish an equal balance of the sexes. Although such a state of things is only transitory, still, women, of whatever condition, who arrive during periods of bridal scarcity, are sure to be welcomed and caught up immediately.

In the older states, American young ladies exhibit a rather paradoxical conjugal tendency. Their great ambition is to marry a man of title; it is a weakness which has gained all classes, and to which they sacrifice everything. Any European, however slightly he may be recommended, if he be the bearer even of a doubtful title of nobility, by going to the United States is sure of making a wealthy match, if he only have patience to bide his time. There are certainly men who, by their personal qualities, adorn the title they have received from their ancestors, and nothing can be more praiseworthy than to seek their alliance; but that is not generally what is uppermost in the female American mind. The title is all in all. If America had been a woman, she would not have suffered the Prince of Wales to depart from her shores a single young man.

That the American law is not only blind to the veritable character of the institution of marriage, but that it even lends itself to offences against society, is shown by a crime committed.

in New York in 1857. One Dr. Burdell lived in a house which was his own property, at a few paces' distance from a much-frequented street. He resided on the ground floor; in the story above, there lodged a woman named Cunningham, with whom it was asserted that Burdell had been too intimate. She was visited by several persons, particularly by one Eckel, who was supposed to be Burdell's successor in her affections. The woman had repeatedly and earnestly solicited the doctor to marry her; he had always refused. Nevertheless, as he was supposed to be worth some twelve or sixteen thousand pounds, the woman Cunningham was accused of having planned his murder, after having taken previous steps to secure the inheritance. As the facts relating to the murder were never judicially proved, we can give no more than the substance of the indictment, according to which the woman Cunningham went one evening, in company with a man supposed to be Eckel, to the house of an obscure Protestant minister to whom they were quite unknown. The man wore a false beard the better to disguise himself; he stated his name to be Burdell, and the couple required to be united in marriage. The only witness was a young daughter of the woman Cunningham. The minister, without taking any trouble to ascertain the identity of the parties, married them in a few minutes, under the names declared to him. No registration of the marriage was made; no signatures of the parties were given; consequently, the only trace which remained of this culpable act was the certificate which the bride and the pretended bridegroom obtained from the complaisant minister. Not a syllable of all this was known in Dr. Burdell's house.

Two or three months afterwards, New York was startled by the murder of Burdell in his room one evening in January. Cunningham and Eckel were arrested; great inquiries were made, but nothing was discovered. The prisoners were discharged.

If matters had rested here, the crime would appear to have been committed without any adequate motive; for the marriage would only have given the female culprit a right to a jointure, which was of comparatively trifling importance; but the marriage was necessary, to support the assumption of a pregnancy which should supply a false heir to the unfortunate Burdell. But in consequence of measures skilfully taken, the attempted fraud was judicially proved.

Suppose American marriages to have been environed by a portion only of the formalities and guarantees required in France—only with those enacted in England—and the murder would assuredly have been prevented. Let notice be published in the official locality belonging to the parish; let the identity of the parties be ascertained; let the celebration of the ceremony in broad day be authenticated by the presence of known witnesses of full age; let the contract be registered in the local archives; and the idea of such a crime as this could not enter the thoughts of the worst sharper.

In spite of the extreme facilities for contracting marriage in the United States, there nevertheless exists a most characteristic prohibition. In divers States—say in the majority—the marriage of whites with Indians, negroes, and mulattoes, is prohibited, whatever may be the degree of fairness of the latter's skin. But even where the statute is silent—nay, even where it is favourable to this sort of alliances—the force of prejudice is so strong that nobody has the moral courage to brave it. Marriages of the kind do sometimes take place, but always among the lowest of the population; and even then it is not always safe for the husband to remain on the scene of the marriage; for amongst the populace the prejudice of race is as deeply rooted as in the upper classes. It is curious that of late years more white women than white men have contracted marriage with persons of colour in two free States. But the circumstance itself is of such rare occurrence, that no conclusion can be drawn from these exceptional instances.

And the matrimonial union of slaves—what of that? Considered either as a chattel or as a responsible being before God and before the law, it would seem that that thinking chattel ought to be authorised to contract a legitimate marriage, in order better to adapt his life to ideas of social and family duty, the two grand elements of civilisation. But it is no such thing; no man of colour, in a state of slavery, has the right to contract a legal marriage, either with another slave or with a free person. The master has always the right to break the connexion, how strong or slight soever it be, which the slave has formed, even with the master's consent; and, as the law refuses to regulate such connexions, there is no recognised paternity. The man and the woman, the father, the mother, and the children, may all be separated at the master's will.

The law of divorce is not the same in all the States of the Union, but there is a great tendency to adopt similar reasons for granting divorces. Separation from bed and board, *à mensâ et thoro*, finds little favour there. It is considered immoral, in consequence of its leaving, according to Lord Howell's expressions, a wife without a husband, and a husband without a wife. It is celibacy in matrimony. It offers great temptations to either party to go astray, and punishes the innocent more than the guilty. For divorce proper, there are divers reasons admitted by the legislatures of divers states. Among them are, voluntary desertion for one, two, three, or five years; prolonged absence for five years; idiocy or mental derangement; marriage with a negro, an Indian, or a mulatto; acts of cruelty or abuse committed by one of the couple on the other; a great misapprehension of duty towards the helpmate; an habitual state of drunkenness, or the abuse of opium; imprisonment for crimes specified by the local statutes; a refusal to provide the wife with sufficient means of subsistence; a refusal on the part of the wife to follow her husband when he changes his residence; disorders in the con-

duct of one of the couple; the conversion of either to the sect of Shakers. One State, Kentucky, has gone so far as to pass a law, enacting that when a husband advertises in the journals his intention of not paying his wife's debts, she thereby acquires good and sufficient grounds for divorce. This last is a very near approach to Cicero's reasons for wishing to divorce Terentia—not that she gave him any cause of complaint, but because he wanted a fresh dowry to pay his creditors. Longer experience will probably cause the Americans to make some radical changes in this branch of their civil code.

UP A STEP-LADDER.

LITTLE Willie had not appeared at my door for full a month; I missed his cheerful whistle as he came, day by day, tugging up the rough road with the heavy bread-basket at his back, and saw that he had been superseded by another boy, much smaller and of preternaturally grave countenance. I waylaid this boy one afternoon as he was toiling up the hill, and inquired what had become of Willie. He said he didn't know. Had he got a better place? He didn't know. Was he gone to school? He didn't know. Was he poorly? He didn't know. In fact, he knew *nothing*, so I gave him a half-penny for his information and let him struggle on, wondering how in the world he did it.

Willie did not belong to my class at school, but his two big brothers did, and when I saw them the next Sunday, I renewed my inquiries for my merry little friend, and was told that he had got the fever—the fever in our village meaning something generated of damp homes, bad drainage, insufficient water, and sometimes insufficient food.

"He has had it, going on for a month," George told me. I asked if he had had it severely? "He's been very bad in his head, and he don't know none of us but mother. But it's his ears now," was the rather mysterious answer.

I always had a reluctance, difficult to overcome, to go anywhere where I am not certain to be welcome. If I were ill, I should feel inexpressibly annoyed to have strangers coming about me with pudding and tarts; and, what I do not like myself, I am chary of inflicting on other people. But I knew that our clergyman and his wife, whose kitchen is kitchen for all the sick poor in the parish, were away; I reflected that a labouring man with six children, even though two of them are big enough to support themselves, is not commonly provided with a surplus fund against rainy days; so I screwed up my courage, told my old servant to make a regulation pudding and put it in a basket with a few other little matters applicable to the case, and set off the next morning to look after Willie.

Down a step from the road, down a steep ungraded cart-way, past an immense mound of agricultural enrichment, down a sloppy foot-path between currant-bushes bearing innumerable

small rags of clothing but no leaves, down a series of stepping-stones, and I am at the open door of Willie's home. Just inside are five small dots of children, four of them "playing at ladies," and the fifth, a curly-headed urchin of about three years old, enacting the part of audience at the comedy. One of the four, a blue-eyed maiden of six and a previous acquaintance of mine, immediately detaches herself from the rest of the group, advances, drops a bob curtsey, and then turns sharply round to her companions and asks where are their manners? Their manners are instantly made manifest by three more bob curtseys, but the curly head proves refractory, retires behind his largest little sister, and peeps at my basket round the corner of her elbow, while my blue-eyed damsel apologises for him as being "only little Robert"—too young yet to have any manners.

And we all stand and stare at each other, the children quite at home under the circumstances, myself feeling awkward that I have not a second basket to give up to plunder by these infantry, until I am recalled to myself by hearing blue eyes communicate my name and place of abode to her next neighbour, when I ask if they know where Willie's mother is? Immediately they all chorus forth, "Mother's gone out ironing at Mrs. Dent's." I then ask, "Where is Willie?" to which they simultaneously reply, "He's up there, in mother's bed;" and following the direction of their pointing fingers, I turn round and perceive an almost perpendicular step-ladder, the foot of which is directly opposite the doorway, and the head, without any circumlocution, in a loft. In which loft, when I look up, I can see hanging, the identical best coat in which George has attended my class for two years past.

"Will you go up and see him?" asks blue eyes; and the biggest girl, who may be of the mature age of seven, darts forward to pilot the way. But I am doubtful as to the step-ladder, and suggest the expediency of my seeing "mother" if she is to be got at; on which all the children, except Robert, execute manœuvres across a flat of blighted cabbages, and disappear round a corner, while he and I improve our acquaintance by continuing to stare at each other. In a few minutes the quartette return as they went, followed by "mother," who stops ten yards off and makes a bob curtsey of the same pattern (I detest this curtseying, but I daren't say "Don't curtsey to me"), and then approaches, looking as if she were thankful to see me, though I never saw her in my life before.

She is a pretty woman of not more than two or three and thirty, with beautiful eyes, delicate features, and dark hair; all her clothing is clean and whole and decent; and when Robert butts at her with his curly head, he is taken up, kissed, and cashiered with two of the girls who are his sisters into the house-place, while she gives me her account of Willie, standing in the doorway.

"He ought to have been in his bed a fortnight before he was, the doctor says," she tells me,

"He is on the mend now, but very weak, and will I go up and see him?"

It is my destiny to mount that step-ladder. So, up the step-ladder into a loft with a pallet-bed in it, and a thinly covered mattress in one corner on the floor; through a doorway without a door, into a room about twelve feet square, in which, on "mother's bed," lies Willie—or Willie's shadow.

He is wide awake, and watching a casual gleam of sunshine that has found its way through the rainy clouds, and strayed in at the low lattice window; but as I go up to his pillow, he turns on me a pair of wonderful eyes, and says, faintly, "A little better." His mother explains that he fancies I asked him how he did. His hearing is quite gone, and he cannot take in a word. I suggest that this arises from weakness, and will pass away as he gets his strength again. "You think it will, ma'am?" she replies, and looks at him very wistfully; on which, supposing himself addressed, Willie says again, "A little better," and, a minute after, "Drink, mother."

She says she will go and warm him a drop of milk, and disappears, leaving us together. Willie turns his eyes slowly from the sunshine to my face, and from my face to the sunshine. I look at him and at the place where he lies, and meditate on the mysterious inequalities there are in the world, and on the hard lives of the working poor.

The room is as pure as scrubbing and whitewash can make it; everything about the bed is scrupulously clean; the old chest of drawers is covered on the top with a white cloth; as is also a rough deal box by the wall, which serves as a table, and on which stands the bottle of doctor's stuff, with a glass and spoon disposed ornamentally in connexion with a copy of the British Workman, a farthing hymn-book, and a Bible. On the walls, fastened up with pins, are some rudely coloured scriptural prints, a few missionary tract pictures, and, in one corner above the head of another mattress on the floor, the Lord's Prayer in large type. In the sunshine of the window are three plants, fresh and green; and, though the room is low, it is not oppressively close, for there is a thorough current of air blowing up from the open door below.

When his mother returns with the warm milk, he drinks it eagerly, and the pudding being extracted from the basket, he eats a portion of that, with an enjoyment pleasant to watch. Having finished it, he stretches out his arm and looks up at his mother.

"He wants you to see how thin his arm is, ma'am," she explains; and rolling up his night-gown sleeve, she shows me a weak little white skeleton limb which will carry no more bread-baskets for many a month to come.

She then sits down by his pillow, puts her arm round him, and makes him lean against her while she gives me the particulars of his illness; how good he was, how little hope there was for him at one time, but how the doctor says now he will come round nicely if she can get him a little strengthening food. The clergyman, she

says, being away, she did not know whom to apply to. "I didn't think of you, ma'am, till George told me you'd been asking about Willie; I've spent many a sixpence for him, but I can't get what he likes; he takes eggs best, and he would eat three or four in a day, for he's getting hungry now, but he mustn't have them; I let him have one, but I pay three ha'pence apiece." On my inquiring what the doctor recommends, she tells me a little broth or arrow-root—nothing stronger yet—which I volunteer to send her. It then occurs to me to ask if the fever is infectious? To which she says she believes not if I don't stay there over long; so, having fulfilled my present business, I think it will, perhaps, be expedient to go away; I therefore bid Willie good-by, with the foolish remark that I am sure he is grown, and that the fever will make a man of him, which, fortunately, he does not hear, and then I follow his mother into the outer loft, and down the step-ladder.

Next day, my old servant, who is interested in Willie as the only boy whom she never had to tell to shut the garden-gate after him, makes a pitcher of excellent broth, and leaves the meat in it, and when submitting it to my taste for approval, she assures me that if Willie's mother has any management about her she will freshen it every day, and it will keep and fit him for a week: which intimation she also conveys to George when he comes for it at his dinner-time. But when I go down, long before the week's end, to see the little fellow again, his mother tells me it lasted him only two days, for what was left after that, turned sour.

I achieve the step-ladder again. Willie is still in bed, and still as deaf as a stone, and I think he looks a shade duller and more pallid than before; but there is no sunshine through the window on the whitewashed wall to-day, and the drizzling rain slips mistily like a curtain over the glass. Still his mother says fondly, as she puts the scattered hair off his forehead, "He mends a little—yes, ma'am, I'm sure he mends a little;" and she adds, that the doctor says if he could have some jelly broth made of cow-heel or calf's-foot, it would be better and more strengthening than anything else. When I reply that I would order the butcher's wife to send her some feet, she hesitates a moment, and then says, "I can clean them and prepare them myself, ma'am, if I get them just as they are; you will have to pay a shilling for the set, but if you do not name it, Mrs. Briskett will do them, and they will cost half-a-crown."

When I return home, I tell my servant the fate of her broth that was to last a week, on which she exclaims, "She has got no keeping place, I'll be bound! but she needn't ha' let it waste! And did she waste that good mutton too? Why, it would ha' been a dinner for all of 'em. What sort of a house is it, missis?" I reply that I have only seen the place into which the outer door opens, which is a sort of scullery where the washing-tub and a few pans appear to live, and

which had the bare ground for floor with a few large round pebbles in it; the family living-room I conjecture to be below the larger bedroom up the step-ladder. She replies that most likely that scullery is larder and pantry and all, but bids me inquire the next time I go, "for," adds she, "I can't abide waste, and if Willie's mother can't keep things as they should be kept, she'd better have 'em little by little every day as he wants 'em. I should like to see how she means to manage them calf's-feet."

A few days later, I visit Willie again, and, waiting at the open door, I look round and suppose my servant's conjecture about this scullery being also pantry to be correct, for, besides the pots and pans on the floor, there are a few basins and dishes on a shelf. Before my survey is completed, Willie's mother appears from the dwelling-room, and to my satisfaction I hear that he is down stairs for the first time, to-day. I am accordingly ushered across the scullery and into the kitchen, where he is sitting on a stool within a deep chintz valance, which hangs where a mantelpiece is commonly fixed; for the chimney is a wide open space; there is no range, no oven, no boiler, nothing but a handful of fire on the stones, kept from being scattered about by three bricks set one upon the other at each side, and about a foot apart. Fuel is very costly in our village, and the fire burns slowly; so Willie crouches down to it, looking much less comfortable than when he lay in his mother's bed: while opposite to him, and dead asleep, sits his father, a powerful man in appearance, who, his wife says softly, has only just got home after being out all night leading coals up from the landing to the store. Willie is no better of his deafness yet, but he is coming round. O what a painful process that coming round looks over that starved scrap of fire!

The room has the same decided features of cleanliness under difficulties, of neatness, and attempt at ornament, as the room up the step-ladder. On a rude deal table, home-made, and by no skilful carpenter, is the week's washing, ironed and folded. In the window-sill is the family library, consisting chiefly of old brown books, contents unknown, but outwardly of a religious appearance, with a few plants to give them an air of liveliness. The floor is paved with worn uneven stones set in the clay, the walls are the unplastered walls whitewashed, and as I look out from the window into the dull day which has but just ceased raining, I see the sloppy footpath inclining down to it and all the water draining off to settle in this moist corner.

I don't like to ask prying questions, but I should like to know who owns this cottage and what it costs the family a week. Whatever it costs in money, it will cost enormously more in health and strength, and possibly in children's lives, before its owner will consent to pull it down as unfit for human habitation—which it is. But Willie's mother has no complaint to make—if she says a word, it is of somebody's kindness

—so I suggest no grievance, but quietly convey myself away, leaving the father still fast asleep.

I have got over the awkwardness of feeling myself an intruder, and a few days later I am that way again; but the cabbage garden and the stones before the door are not decorated any more with the dots of children enacting ladies. The outer door stands open, but the inner one is shut, and, while I stand knocking, I hear a childish wail of suffering, than which I know no sound so sad: then the voice of our clergyman, who is home again, speaking to Willie's mother. As he comes out, I enter and see Willie, sitting on his stool under the valance as before, and a cradle on the stones beside him in which lies little Robert. Their mother's eyes are red with weeping or watching, or both, but in answer to my question if the little one is ill, she only says, in her natural way, which is neither patient nor plaintive, but simply acquiescent in what is, as if she had no idea it either could be or ought to be otherwise, "Yes, ma'am, he's got the fever too, he began three days ago." And as the pitiful inarticulate wail continues, she lifts him in her arms and holds his curly head against her neck, and kisses him until it ceases; but he is very bad in his head, and the great eyes have a very different expression from what they had when he peeped round his sister's elbow at my basket.

"I don't get much rest with him at nights," his mother tells me, and puts a chair for me to sit down, and sits down herself, nursing him in her lap, where he lies quiet enough. Then she tells me about him, and what the doctor says. "And don't I see Willie getting on?" He has been out a minute or two in the sun, but he could not stand by himself, and his boots are too heavy for his little thin feet. So I suggest a superannuated pair of my own, which she says she will be very glad of; and she defers to me and consults me, and I know nothing, and feel that I am nothing, beside her, except that all my speculations and stories of struggle and suffering are mere shreds and patches of phantoms compared with her bare and bitter experience of life.

The two little girls are silently busy at the table, ironing. I inquire of them if they often burn their fingers, an idea which they repudiate with emphatic head-shakings. "It is their doll's clothes, ma'am; it keeps them quiet and makes them handy," their mother tells me; on which they smile, and display some wonderful bits of rag, the property of a much-abused but probably much-cherished wooden image now sitting unclothed on the centre pile of books in the window-sill. The fire is a little brighter to-day—perhaps the clergyman brightened it—and Willie has not quite such a wan and weary look on his white face. He watches his mother and myself as we talk, which he never did before, and though he cannot hear a word, he can raise his mind, apparently, to guess about what is going on; and to look on the best side of everything, perhaps his deafness may be almost a blessing for a little while, for it will prevent him from being

further worn by poor curly-headed Robert's pitiful wail.

This is not poverty under its worst aspect; it is very very far from that. There is no drunken husband or lazy wife to waste the earnings of labour; there is industry, thrift, cleanliness: a successful struggle to be good, honest, pious, decent, orderly, under very hard conditions. There is no special want; there are regular wages, and not bad wages; there is the father toiling night or day; there are two boys at constant work, and a good mother, able and willing to make them a good home; yet all the possibilities of health, and natural growth, and every-day comfort, are defeated in a dwelling which the most scrupulous care can never render what a dwelling of human beings ought to be.

Instead of sun-bonnets for Central Africa, could any fund be raised to enable penurious or indigent landlords to put kitchen ranges in the kitchens of their labouring tenants, and to bribe them to pull down their pest-houses, and erect dwellings in which fever will not always be at war with youth and strength, and always getting the victory?

DESPISED AND FORGOTTEN.

THERE they lie, like buried leaves, or dead twigs without buds or roots; things which have had their uses and their hour, but which have gone down now to eternal forgetfulness. Who thinks of them? Who knows even the names of Dorat, of Cubières, of Olympe de Gouges, of le Cousin Jacques, of De la Morlière, of Grimod de la Reynière? Who takes note of the fret and fever of their lives, or marks the spot where their feet slipped, or where they grasped firmer hold of the great ladder of their fortunes? Yet they were personages in their day; they represented certain forms of popular life, and the thoughts that then governed society; they were giant weeds flung up on the top of the floating scum: unluckily for themselves and humanity, some of them drifted into the pastures where the good food lay, and for a time were classed with things wholesome, sweet, and sound. Lately, M. Charles Mauselet has uncovered their dust-hidden tombs, and read us the secrets they enclose. They are sad secrets, some of them; and the saddest are those where the laughter is loudest.

The group of Despised and Forgotten which he has given us belong to the end of the eighteenth century; just when the old was passing into the new, when the florid follies of the shepherdesses and the loose undress of the goddesses of the Renaissance were being merged in the tricolor of the Convention and the red woollen of the Carmagnole. The mixture of court frivolity and republican fervour which they display, is beyond measure wonderful.

Take the life of the poet Cubières as an example. What a strange story that was! Strange in the excessive levity, want of self-

respect, and universal shoe-blackening which it shows—strange, in the sudden change from Doris and Chloe to Brutus and Virginia, from Dorat to Marat, without an apparent thought that coat-turning was a dishonouring employment, or that a man's life had any nobler aim than that of swimming with the stream, and feathering his nest from all sorts of birds. Cubières was one of the least worthy of his class: and his class was a bad one. One morning, Dorat, the greatest love poet of that time, was at his toilet dressing for an appointment. A young abbé was introduced. He had a small scroll in his hand, and came, he said, to solicit the great man's literary patronage, and to read to him some verses, "the children of his leisure."

"Where do you come from?" says Dorat, powder-puff in hand, leaning over the mirror.

"From Saint-Sulpice" smirks our young abbé of twenty, "whence my love poetry procured me the honour of an expulsion only yesterday evening."

"One recommendation," says Dorat, smiling.

"And now, what will you do?"

"Make verses," says our abbé, with a satisfied air.

"Good. And then?"

"Make verses, Monsieur Dorat."

"You are from the south?" says Dorat, with a slight sneer.

"I am."

"Your name?"

"Michel de Cubières."

By this time the poet-mousquetaire was powdered. While buckling on his sword he rapidly gave his young companion three bits of excellent advice: the first was, to exchange that vile black coat of his for one in silk with rose-coloured spots; the second, to be openly favoured by women of condition; the third, to study his, Dorat's, works, "models of perfumed grace and delicacy," after which he could not go wrong. He then sent him away; giving him a commission to do some fluttering little trille for the *Almanach des Muses*.

In due season, the young abbé returned to the master's house, this time in a coat all laced and embroidered, and with the curliest of tresses covering his recent tonsure. He was an apt scholar, and Dorat had very little trouble with him. This first lesson in tailoring and hair-dressing had been admirably learnt; the next, on the good graces of the women of condition, had to come. It was not difficult, and took even less time than the former. Madame Fanny de Beauharnais—Dorat's own especial Fanny—undertook this part of the young abbé's education: and Dorat was too well-bred to complain. M. de Beauharnais counted for nothing in the question; the contest resting only between the two lovers, by whom it was carried on in the most gentlemanlike style of the period. Finally, Madame Fanny settled the matter by publicly installing the disgraced priest as her favourite, in the room of the verse-making soldier; but Dorat got secret indemnification,

and, besides, was soon consoled elsewhere. Cubières was now at the zenith of his glory. He wrote verses with extreme facility, and inundated the town with them; he got well noticed by the critics, and well received by the court; was gay and gallant; had money, fame, and drank deep of the golden cup of courtly favour and red-heeled popularity. He was the most unscrupulous flatterer of the day; and the adulation he poured out full-handed on others he received back in kind, none the lessened by the transit. If the need took him to write verses more warm than modest, he ascribed them to M. de Palmézeaux, into whom he one morning "doubled" himself, and as Cubières-Palmézeaux, was the smiling author of some of the most highly-coloured poems afloat.

In the midst of these congenial triumphs Cubières-Palmézeaux was startled by the death of his master, Dorat. Cubières, who from obedience had borrowed his mistress, from admiration now borrowed his name, and henceforth figured in the world of letters as Dorat-Cubières, the disciple, friend, and literary legatee of the Catullus of the eighteenth century. So he went on his way a little longer, daintily picking his steps among the royal roses of Versailles, and heedless of all save pleasure and success. And then the hoarse cannon suddenly boomed across Paris, the tocsin rang, the people uprose, and the Revolution broke out in all its fierceness and fury. Dorat-Cubières was at the house of Fanny de Beauharnais when the cannon of the Bastille sounded. He threw down his gilded lyre wreathed with artificial roses, and rushed off to the scene of wrath and bloodshed. Seizing the humour of the moment, and divining what was coming, he instantly wrote an account of the taking of the Bastille, as if he had been there, signing himself "Michel de Cubières, citizen and soldier."

Gods and goddesses, Chloes and Damons, were now abandoned, and the Law was our tuneless renegeade's new mistress. The adulator of Marie Antoinette was found "attaching an oak leaf to the brow of Marat," and the most insipid courtier of the day became the most furious republican. Paris ridiculed him for his new devotion, but Marat-Cubières—for he had again changed godfathers as well as creeds—cared nothing for such sneers; and soon the commune of Paris rewarded him with a secretaryship as the price of his turned coat. Cubières was inordinately proud of his new employment, and made himself conspicuous for his revolutionary zeal. When the law was passed which removed all of noble birth from any office under the state, the Chevalier de Cubières—who, in the good old times, had so often vaunted his aristocratic state and condition—now strove with all his energy to show that he was but a low-born commoner, with not a drop of gentle blood in his veins. His pleadings went for nothing; and Dorat-Marat-Cubières-Palmézeaux was dismissed, to carry his sighs and his numbers elsewhere. Before his dismissal, though, he signed, in his quality as secretary, the order for the arrest of

Madame Roland, between whom and himself there had always been a smothered feud; and he saved the life of a fugitive nobleman in a generous and grandiose manner. It is pleasant to find him doing one good thing.

He now went back to literature, dropping the name both of Dorat and of Marat, and retaining only that of Palmézeaux; still the gallant courtier, the unblushing flatterer, beloved by all women, respected by no man, and finally deserted by the fickle world which had once perfumed his path with incense. Cubières died in 1820, so miserably poor that he used to be seen, all in rags and wretchedness, buying a pennyworth of "red eggs" at a fruiterer's, and slinking off to eat them at a wine-shop. This was the end of the friend and pupil of the luxurious Dorat, of the favoured lover of Joséphine's aunt, of the signer of the decree which brought Madame Roland to the scaffold.

Down at Montauban lived a pretty, graceful, intelligent, but wholly uneducated little girl, known simply by the name of Marie-Olympe. Some said she was the daughter of Louis the Fifteenth; but her blood was not quite so "blue" as that. A certain nameless grisette, and the grave, devout, austere Marquis de Pompadour—the Catholic writer par excellence, the inexorable enemy of Voltaire and the Encyclopédistes, whose morals were as irreproachable as his lineage, and whose pride was as intense as his piety—knew more about the birth of that little Marie than King or Kaiser. The secret was well kept, and never reached Voltaire's ears, else the whole world would have rung with the scandal. Not knowing how to read or write, but quick and very promising, Marie-Olympe, when fifteen, was married to a certain M. Aubry, a retired traitor, with sixty thousand pounds, and old enough to be her grandfather. He had the complaisance to die before the bridal year was out, leaving Marie a very wealthy and very lovely widow of sixteen, burning with curiosity to turn her back on virtuous dull Montauban, and see the world. And she saw the world. She locked up the eating-house, and carried her sixteen years and her flashing black eyes to Paris, where she knew that her money, her youth, and her beauty, would be sure to give her a brilliant success. She was right. Paris fêted and praised her without stint, and gave her lovers without number. The next fourteen years of her life were passed in one round of dissipation and gallantry. But the day came when the graces of sixteen were lost in the deepening lines of tairty, and the love which had blazed so fiercely now burnt itself out like blackened straw. Olympe de Gougues—for she, too, changed her name, and sank the plebeian Aubry—hung on to the world of gallantry as long as it would have her; when, fairly abandoned, she gave herself up to the world of literature. She wrote dramas and plays, or rather she dictated them to her secretary—for she could not write, even then; and she de-

lugged the Comédie Française with her wretched productions. Her great ambition was to have one of her pieces acted on the boards of Molière's theatre. It was in vain that she bribed the principal actors, fed the committee, wept and prayed, complimented, persecuted, and resented: they would have none of her. Now, it was a superb orange-tree, by which she would win a favourable verdict; now, a turkey stuffed with truffles; now, a group in porcelain—Apollo and the Muses—for M. Molé's sideboard. All in vain: they accepted her presents and rejected her pieces, ate her turkey and cut up her dramas. Olympe was not daunted. As fast as one piece was refused she composed another, to share the same fate, until, wearied and exasperated, she bearded the awful committee in full conclave—this time without flatteries or bribes to soften their hearts. The committee was not accustomed to indignities from its slaves; the name of Madame Olympe de Gouges was angrily erased from the register; her pieces were returned, and an end was put to all intercourse between her and the Comédie Française. Olympe was furious. She wrote and intrigued, and exhaled her despair in violent threats, till she became the standing nuisance of the time. M. de Beaumarchais suffered from her severity; and, as her abuse of her opponents was not always measured, it was no pleasant thing to fall into her hands. Everywhere she was repulsed, everywhere disappointed, until at last she thought better of her quarrel, and humbled herself to the powers. Vanquished by her tears, Molé took her part in the committee, and a reconciliation was effected, by which she was reinstated to exactly the same place as before the quarrel. This truce instantly brought on the devoted heads of the committee, two new pieces. Olympe used to compose a drama in about forty-eight hours; and again and again other dramas poured in in quick succession. The Comédie Française accepted her now as a chronic malady, and courteously declined her pieces without reading them. At last, Olympe wrote a book wherein she gave all the details of her bribes and flatteries, and crying out in despair: "Oh, if I had been a man, what blood I would have shed! what ears I would have cut!"

But graver events were preparing in France, and Olympe de Gouges was startled, like Cubières, from her dreams of Fame, by the cannon of the Revolution. Here was a wider field for her. She flung herself impetuously into the movement, writing to a nation now, instead of to a committee, and demanding speech of the Assembly instead of a play-house audience. She asked to be allowed to defend "Louis Capet" together with Malesherbes: a demand which it is scarcely necessary to add, was rejected by the Convention as unhesitatingly as her dramas by the Comédie Française. She then essayed a piece for the "Theatre of the Republic," a wretched daub of a thing, full of marches and counter-marches and military evolutions, "to suit the taste of the times;" introducing among the prominent cha-

racters people then living—Dumouriez, young Egalité, the Demoiselles Fernig, and others. The republican audience relished her as little as the royalist committee had done. They hissed. In the midst of that terrible sound, Mademoiselle Candelle came to the foot-lights to give the name of the author, when a woman, breathless, wild, dishevelled, crazed, rushed to the front of the boxes, screaming: "Citizens, you demand the author—here she is! It is I, Olympe de Gouges! If you have not found the piece good, it is because the actors have played it horribly!" This was more than flesh and blood could bear. The actors protested that they had done their best, and the audience took their parts; some hissed, some followed her through the lobbies with jeers and insults, some demanded back their money, and poor Olympe had enough to do to escape this outburst. But she obstinately held her own: the play was performed once more, and then the condemnation was so unmistakable that she was obliged to give way, and content herself with publishing a long accusatory account, which is not one of the least curious documents of the period. Beaten back from the ranks of the drama, how was she to feed that mad ambition of hers? how find place and action for her insatiable desires? Literature had failed her, like love, but politics were still open. She must be doing something, the more wild and mad the better: she must be fighting, now that she was not held worth the loving; so she turned against Robespierre as the most prominent object in her way. Robespierre quietly replied by a decree of death, and poor mad, feverish Olympe de Gouges laid her head on the scaffold, as the best resting-place her ambition could provide her with.

"Fatal desire of renown!" she was heard to whisper softly to herself, while taking her last look of the Boulevards trees; "I wished to be something!"

"Louis Abel Beffroy de Reigny, called Cousin Jacques, esquire, born at Laon, the sixth of November, 1757, of the Musée de Paris, of the Academies of Arras and Bretagne, &c., fair hair, five feet six in height, with the left eye and cheek damaged by fire, living at Paris, rue des Vieux Augustins, Hôtel de Beauvais, No. 264." This was his own description of himself in one of the early numbers of his many works. With one side of his face half roasted—he was dropped into the fire when a miserable little swaddled-up baby—and the other side handsome, Cousin Jacques began life by falling in love with a pretty young grisette, when he was about seventeen. The affair was discovered, and he was sent back to school, none the better for the escapade. On his way thither he met with a grenadier, to whom he told his story. The grenadier began by ridicule, but ended by being as much in love as the schoolboy. He soon left his companion, and Cousin Jacques received his first lesson in woman's inconstancy and a friend's treachery. The whole chapter

reads like a leaf torn out of *Gil Blas*, and carries one far far back, to Salamanca and the days of duennas and waiting-maids and roving youths out on adventures, soldiers without a captain, and the whole loose jolly world of that time. Cousin Jacques was next made an abbé. It was his best guarantee for respectable bread and meat; and was the fashion. Whether the young priest kept the vows which usually accompanied that coronal shaving, was another matter. The world expected him to break them, and the world was not disappointed—at least in Cousin Jacques's case. When an abbé, he went to Ferney to read a little poem to Voltaire: every writer went to Ferney then, to read poems to Voltaire. The patriarch was not difficult. "Monsieur l'Abbé," he said, "you must give this pretty trifle to the world." So, henceforth Cousin Jacques's career was decided on, and he became a literary man.

He was, strangely enough, connected with the Robespierres, at two points: he had been Maximilian's schoolfellow, and had beaten him in some boyish game, "for which he would never be forgiven," said he, full of dread, when Robespierre's name was the greatest power in France: and he had been Augustin's tutor. Indeed, he was strangely mixed up with the Revolutionist party altogether; he, the gay timid light-hearted Rabelais of the time, of all men least fitted for such company. Before the evil days came, Cousin Jacques made all Paris ring with his inexhaustible wit and good humour. He wrote his famous periodical, *The Moons*; he wrote *The Island of Cataplasms*, *The Comet's Ball*, *The Two Parises*, one on the top of the other, the *History of the musician Gobinchelli*, and a host of oddities of the like character. In one of his *Moons*, he drew up the programme of a certain menagerie which he desired to establish. A wag took him at his word, and one day half Paris ran at the heels of a magnificent ass, which was paraded through the streets—red ribbons floating at its tail, crape rosettes at its ears, two moons of gilt copper at its nostrils, and, on its forehead, a green paper with these words in monstrous gilt letters: "Ass for Cousin Jacques." He was the ancestor of Charivari, of our *Punch*, and the modern humorous almanacks; and once, when about to translate his office from one street to another, he published a minute description of his route, and gave an inventory of the chairs and tables he was going to carry with him, adding, "It is not necessary to illuminate." He wrote one pretty sentimentality, which was immensely successful, called *Les Ailes de l'Amour*, and which he applauded as loudly as any one; coming to the foot-lights to receive the praises of the audience, and looking so like an overgrown schoolboy, that it was the *mot* of the day to say: "Cousin Jacques makes better verses than bows." In fact, he was quite one of the floating notabilities of the time, one of the literary powers, till the Revolution came and spoiled all.

Reason or none, Cousin Jacques, the popular amiable light-hearted humorist, who cared for

nothing but love and laughter, must be made into an earnest republican. The people who loved him, and had everything their own way, dragged him to the *Hôtel de Ville*, to write the history of the siege of the Bastille. "I am a song-writer, not an historian," protested the poor poet; but they never heeded. So, he sat down and wrote his history phrase by phrase, repeating each sentence before he wrote it, or, rather, giving a choice of several, and preserving only those which were chosen by the majority. Surely never was a history written in such manner, before or since! Fifty-six thousand copies of this history were sold for the benefit of the besiegers' families; but all the good which Cousin Jacques got out of the siege or the history, was a couple of enormous bullets, and an old cuirass weighing thirty-two pounds. He was, however, made one of the company of the Bastille Volunteers, and decorated with the ribbon of the order—a tricolor, bearing a bastille reversed. Also he received the visits of, at various times, and had to entertain, seventeen thousand of the conquerors: each of whom pretended that he had been the principal actor on that hateful day; and to all of whom Cousin Jacques had to listen, and appear as if he believed. The earnest work of the Revolution stopped poor Cousin Jacques's play. His *Moons* suffered a perpetual eclipse, and his affairs fell into sad disorder. From comparative affluence he fell down to indigence, grew sad and mournful, and overcame with terror and terrible forebodings. At times he scarcely seemed master of himself, and wrote to André Dumont, to ask that representative of the people "why he hated him so much?" His tears and his terrors, his fears and his agonies, at last wearied the not very patient executive. He was arrested by the Committee of Public Safety—to give him, as it were, something to be sad for. It is not supposed that any harm was intended this unnerved macaronic Jeremiah; but he believed that every one was thirsting for his blood, and he suffered horribly. He escaped, and was pursued; finally took refuge with a friend, who hid him in a cupboard, where he was left for forty-eight hours without food, light, or water, surrounded by people who would have given him up to the police, and not daring so much as to sneeze, nor yet to sleep, for fear he should snore. He never quite recovered this shock, and died in 1811, a mournful long-visaged broken-down old man. Cousin Jacques was a sad fellow. True to his beginnings, he was for ever in love, though he was married to a woman whom he declared he adored. He made no provision for his daughters whom he idolised, and took especial care that, during his lifetime, they should not suffer by any one like to himself, for he never allowed any man whomsoever to enter his house. After his death they married, and married well; and it is to be hoped were less deceived than their mother before them. Cousin Jacques was witty, gay, good-natured, and good-hearted, but his habits and morals were simply—untranslatable. He was the last of his school: and the world has sus-

tained no loss in the permanent shutting up of his school.

There was the Chevalier de la Morlière, "with only one letter different from Molière," who hated Clairon the actress, and organised a cabal against her, got put under very uncomfortable police surveillance for his pains, and finally was forbidden the theatre altogether: who, after a youth of high company and a manhood of hideous debauchery, sinking ever lower and lower till there seemed no fouler depth to which he could fall, died, a half-starved beggar, having seen his last victim, poor Denise, the guitar-player—seventeen when he was sixty-six—die of want before him. He, too, was a literary power in his day; could bring tears of rage from Clairon's haughty eyes; once supped with Dubarry, who gave him a hundred Louis, a smile, and her hand to kiss, in return for a dedication; was "le Chevalier;" the author of *Angola*, a popular novel; and for a period was caressed and fêted by the fine folks, till his evil nature broke out too openly for even that evil time, and all men and women with any decency were forced to abandon him to the frightful fate he had chosen.

And there was the handsome little reprobate Desforges, who had as many lovers as there are days in the year, and who was present at that horrible massacre of eighteen hundred people in the theatre at Marseilles, when the soldiers fired on the audience because they hissed a certain piece which had been commanded by a local unpopularity. His life has nothing more noteworthy in it than his cleverness and unblushing licentiousness, yet he was of no small account in his day, and brought shame and sorrow upon many a nobler man. And there was Grimod de la Reynière, called Balthazar, appropriately enough—the most gormandising of a family of gourmands—whose grandfather died of a *pâté de foie gras*, whose father was the most noted epicure that Paris or the whole civilised world could show, and who, himself, true to the traditions of his race, was born with webbed hands, and carried the science of gastronomy up to the very highest pitch of which it was capable. The father of Grimod de la Reynière was a wealthy parvenu, a farmer-general; his mother, a Mademoiselle de Jarente, sister to Malesherbes, and niece of the Bishop of Orleans, as proud as she was poor, and debasing her blue blood to the gold-coloured mud of the parvenu, with many a wry face and balancing of her empty purse. Grimod's deformity told sadly against him in the heart of his aristocratic mother. It was bad enough to have married a De la Reynière at all, but to give birth to a palmiped De la Reynière—to a creature with goose-feet instead of hands—was horrible! Mademoiselle de Jarente never forgave her son his misfortune, and never made even a show of loving him. He did the best he could to hide his defect, and had well-looking false hands

of steel springs, with long steel hooks or claws for fingers. These elegant masterpieces of machinery he always covered with white kid gloves; but once, when a boy, he was teased by two ladies who insisted on seeing his steel fingers, so he took off his gloves and scratched them so unmercifully that he sent them shrieking and bleeding to his mother. He was fond of practical jokes.

Grimod might have been a great man: he was full of genius, and had not a bad heart, though he was eccentric enough: but he had early a terrible blow in a certain love disappointment which practically ruined him. He wanted to marry his cousin, to whom he was ardently attached; but he was denied, and the girl was married out of hand hastily, to some one else. Grimod never throve morally after this. He plunged into every kind of extravagance, more like a madman than one of sane and healthy mind; his conduct at last becoming so unbearable that his parents cut off his allowance and left him to sink or swim by himself; whereupon Master Balthazar took to driving his own carriage for hire. And once, when his lady-mother came out of her magnificent hotel, she found her son sitting on the steps, with a market gardener's basket full of vegetables on his arm. He offered them to her for sale, as she passed. One of his numerous pranks was the announcement of his death; and the invitation to his funeral of several of his most intimate friends. At the hour when the procession was to form, suddenly the folding-doors of the dining-room were flung wide open, a flood of light streamed forth, and there stood Grimod, alive and well, prepared to do the honours of the most magnificent banquet ever given. His friends forgave the joke, for the sake of the viands. He went through the time of the Terror, always eating and drinking of the best, as if these were the supreme duties of a man's life, and giving his immortal soul diligently to the stewpans. He married a vulgar little actress of low birth, and died in 1838, an octogenarian, loyal to the last to the faith of gastronomes.

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